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William F. DeVault

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To all the totem-muses who have stayed in my graces:
Alabaster, Psyche, Valkyrie, the Mad Gypsy, the Butterfly, Suede,
Goldenheart, Agnia, Lola, Nightblooming Jasmine,
Pink Champagne, Looking Glass, the Truth, and Padparadscha.
May you all, one day, embrace your immortality with joy and peace.
You are all part of this volume and I am grateful for your existence and patience.

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# A very brief introduction

If you happen to own one or more of the constituent volumes merged herein, don't feel bad.

They (Grace, Cleave, Mythos, Bragi) stand alone on their own, certainly.

But...when merged with the other three sisters of this set, they create a more intense and vivid landscape and portrait of my works during the four-year period in which they were published. Inspired by specific moment and muses, they are a collection of verbal photographs and I would not change a thing about them. I wrestled with having this volume in some order other than by original volume and poem order but decided this would tamper with the flow and content of the original. These were issued approximately 12 months apart over a period in my life where I surrendered to the flow of emotions and passions, while funneling, channeling, the intensity to the page.

To you unfamiliar with my works and particularly with the totem-muses that have driven them, relax and enjoy. You will find, no matter what you are comfortable with or seek for, poems within this collection that will satisfy you and your needs.

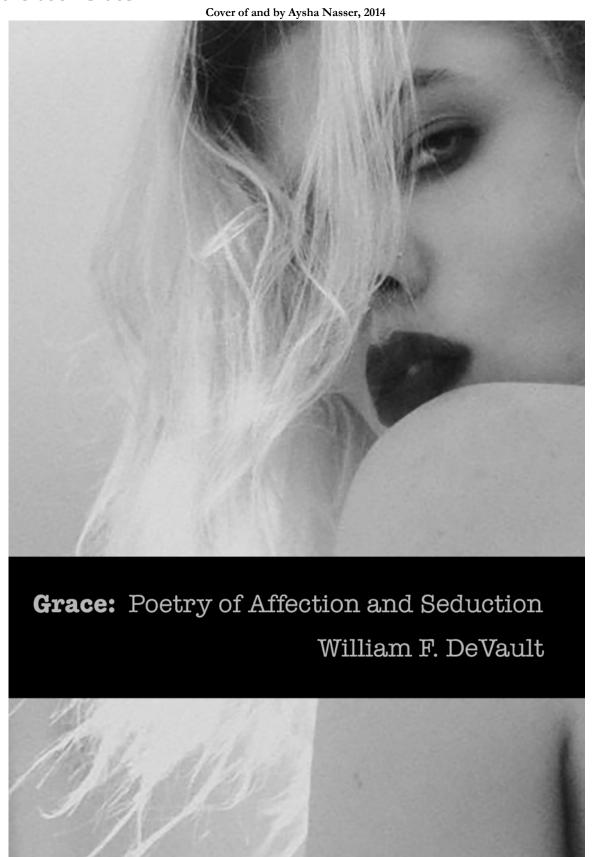
The decision to bring all four of these books, including two of my best-selling collections, into a single volume was a logical extension of my desire to make books that are durable. The market is aflood with the new generation chapbooks, a sometimes unfortunate by-product of the digital renaissance, but I have always liked the feel of a solid, substantial volume in my hands. The fact that we are co-issuing this in hardback, softcover, and eBook formats is a nod to the reality of the marketplace and the diversity of the readers, wanting to satisfy all interested in diving in.

Enjoy, and don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or comments. I don't hide.

William F. DeVault

November 2019

# from the book **Grace**.



#### **Grace**

release the troubled memories that hold you in their bonds, liberation for our pain and stain for what our merge responds. grace. a trace of sweetness. musky, like dusk, jasmine and saffron. the thermodynamics of an ancient, urgent heat, action and reaction as the parabola of kisses misses nothing worth mention, intention sown and reaped, moistures seep and weep and keep the tension barely bearable. I communicate a wordless poetry in surrender, tender as a sacrifice to a price for bartered beauty, defender of that which has already been given in chaste clarity and charity, a gift to the magi who imagined us as spirits of inescapable verity. hold nothing back not even the blackness and I will not slack in my prescient tense of what you desire and require, no lack of ardour and all my amomancies have become apprenticings to your escape from the grey to lay claim to all your whims and wings.

# The Merchant, The Priest, and The Poet

more than words. the magic. tragic hopes. the moments we barter. merchants in the temple where the priest sadly shakes his head. the barter economy of love and passion. copper for silver. silver for gold. gold for blood and fire. desire. ancient runes. ancient tunes. translated with light that dances barefoot. the soft pad of feet on cool stone when the warm bed makes a fine altar for sacrifices. the clarity of charity in the ecclesiastical sense where love requires nothing. but hopes for everything.

#### Inkwell

I will write a sonnet (perhaps even a villanelle) in living fluid on the flesh of your naked form. Hoping my words enter you. Nourish you. Are taken to heart that you know I mean no disrespect Ultimately you are my inkwell and a single bloom suffices as quill, each word more precious than the previous. All true and earnest and electric. Patiently you wait until I find my final rhyme and you ask me to write again the story of my passion for you in staccato Morse code inside.

# watch the horizon for signs of life

trade greys for reds and golds and greens. satin and silk. and all the textures a kiss can command. warm, full lips. walking their way to the mortal portals. you asked and I was tasked to bring flowers to a garden. to kiss the bloom. petals softly falling. like angels in rebellion. show me your wings my graceful faerie merry in the moment extended into the night and into the light for I would more than lay and play, but walk and talk and practice the alchemy that is ours as it rises with the sun.

#### Two Feet of Snow in Buffalo

Two feet of snow in Buffalo. I should be there to see the flakes settle in your hair, whatever colour it is this week. To catch you if you slip on the ice, or be gracious if you do the same for me. To make sure you have hot cocoa when you get home late, half frozen. To give you a good excuse to call in sick and spend the night warm and safe, wrapped in blankets of wool, not frost. I would like to be there.

### **Impaired**

no. not tonight. the worse for the wine, you are impaired and, to be honest, I am scared that in the morning you will not remember. Í will be forgotten along with the thought processes that slid you, naked, under the sheets and brought you to kiss me with a certain intent. I will, however, stay the night and hold you, if you wish. if in the morning you still believe this is a good idea, I will not leave until you ask me to for I want you and I am unimpaired. drunk only on your beauty.

#### Dragons do not rise, the ground falls away

Listen to the sound of blood in your veins. The pain of life, accumulated scar tissues and issues with memory and dreams. The currency of hope. Of pain. Of pleasure that we measure in teaspoon of numbing, the dumbing of our voices to the choices that will be made for us if we do not speak out. Speak up. Cup our hands and drink deeply like the mighty men of Gideon. Ready to fight, whatever the battlefield, whatever the odds, whatever the gods the pagan parade and serenade with the screams of the sacrificial lambs.

I bring no balm, no curative salve or oil to anoint your warm flesh. I am a distraction from the pain, bringing my own complexities and vexities, for the moments you grant me. Fantasies of distant lands and the hands of strangers that never clench to strike, the peace of release as the blood drains out to shift red heat to an acceptable warmth in the interlude between rude ruttings, an education in a provisional, positional geometry of shifting shapes and close escapes that taste of cinnamon and jasmine.

Comforting ourselves in chaos and bent intent, recently spent and reinvested against untested desires and passions fashioned as images graven and gravure, promises forgotten and finally kept, swept in and out in taut and hot prey, caught and drained of pain. Chased by the dragon, even when unseen, The keen keenings saved for cloisters where the oysters are pried apart and the pearls are kissed in mysteries our histories predicted in an arc of lightning striking in obsidian fire.

#### **Patchwork Hearts**

Failed and healed. Fates sealed and broken into by the grave robbers of our own resurrections. We are the patchwork hearts, the ragdoll golems. Shambling in soft tread menace down ancient trails where what we are pales besides what we dare. Red yarn hair and button eyes, curiosity driving us to occasionally wander off the path and find fire really does burn. Pulling on threads we should ignore as we take risks when we can, take comfort in hope, and dream dreams as large as patchwork hearts can.

### **Seduction in G sharp**

The words are spun like sugar candy, threads and clusters of sweet pinkness, mustering the feelings that steal and seal our destinies, if only for a night, then memories.

You invited me into your life, like the heroine of a novel where the vampire king is more tragic, more noble than the young man at the well who brings flowers.

But powers and magic in amomancies fill the air of the night, like jasmine and honeysuckle and the curiosity of the furiosity of these passions.

A palette of colours that lay the flush and brush on the canvas of your heated frame, runes in white and red bloods, the clarity of true parity and sincerity.

When all is said and done and the sun rises, all the same there is no shame, no blame, that we are the agents of our own pleasures.

I will not seduce you, reduce you to a formula to achieve a goal. You are a flower and a cloud, beautiful and whole and perfect with or without me.

### Legends of songs in a cave

Dragon casting shade! serenade me if you will while I kill time imagining what never was and should have been. Fingers flying over the frets of a precision cithara synchronized to sounds that barely pass for words but communicate the quintessence.

# **Flying Elves**

We are ourselves, flying elves that consider the consequences of our actions. fractions of multitudes are still a lot, and we are caught up on the barbs of barbarism, power feeding our basest shadows. Flexible flirtations, denigrations spoken only when the spine is broken and the limbs entwined barter refined expressions held in dark corners to summon our unique alchemistry

### **Trippingly**

More than just words spoke trippingly on the tongue, stung by lost opportunity, sharper than a slap, in the lap of a luxurious light, as hot and as bright as any fire kindled in a spindly-legged beggary. Sweet, sweet and then some, musky and dusky is the feast, ceased only by command, demands drive a lively recourse, intercourse on the tip of the tongue.

### **Visions without Eyes**

We acknowledge the prize is not a single thing, a kiss or a ring or one more Spring spent to repent lost opportunities, misplaced rather than erased from memories that we wish we could deny. Lola set the bar pretty high and Anais made a mess of the meandering meanings when the only truth is found inarticulate for hours, sheets wet and appetites whetted as the wholly trinity becomes a challenge you once gave me, brave of me to remember when you can't ask for what you want.

#### **Lola Montez**

If I was King of Bavaria would you be my Lola reminding me of the heat of fire banked until fed into an inferno, burning vanity and sanity to ash.

Would you be my courtesan accept a royal title vital to my passion, even if many cursed you? What passes between lovers is not for consensus or vote.

### I will find you

In the labyrinth of your sorrows the joy of what you are shines.

Nothing and no one is ever truly lost and resilience is the key to survival.

Give me a clue and I'll look for you.

Give me a sign and I'll find the way.

If only for an instant, only for a touch only for a moment, to be recalled so much in my magic and my memory, tapestries spun, fires burn eternal once they're begun and you are a sun. A star at a distance but on closer inspection, not just cold light.

### legacy

What do you want from me? A legacy? A legend? Something to confess in later years when I am gone and they look for you to decipher the bread crumbs in my words? I don't care if you hide behind riddles as long as you are, with me, true. Let the psychohistorians lose their minds trying to find the blind spot in your veil they can sail around in their illusions of navigating my sphere, you are here for now, and even if they never find you, as long as you come for your own reasons you are welcome to visit and leave your mark.

#### shadows and smoke

feed me your fantasies. dark vows in light footfalls, calls made to serenade my libido. the music of dreams provoked, invoked and choked out in raspy sighs. the wheres and whens and whys are irrelevant as long as the who is you and true to your words. the scent lingers and I ponder a meal of substance, not just a menu of promises, of shadows and smoke. I will touch and take and slake in every oath uttered to you in transient imaginings when you were hungry and needed to know the savage ravagery is yours for the taking, for making your own like fingernail scars raked to make bloody signatures and sigils of a spellcraft beyond powders and paints, saints damned and demanded in a ceaseless release.

#### in the erotique

Welcome to the erotique, the grown world of grown up words and shadows that sometimes are prettier than the colours. Red looks blacker than black and the white shines to the touch as we drink down our philters and tight sleight of more than hand grant us ardent gardens of wishes places against the candored lust. Controlling our darkest angels with red laces and traces of pain, we cut against the grain to gain control over our souls, deep and hot. Not for nothing, all for something and the feral faeries command, demand the sacrifice of the tormented moments bartered for release.

### linotte: a contemplation

you flit like whim and brush your wings across my notice, a poultice for a ravaged heart. trust before dust and a trace of a dark smile and hunger shared between two similar avians. songs of both the leathery and feathery an urgent urge to surge so deep that sleep is a memory for lesser creatures. and heat becomes its own salvation. little bird with a great thirst. bursting with white wine gone red in a bed of thistles and deep desires.

#### **Disease**

take me tender on your knees, share with me our shared disease, please me with passion and desire. draw me in to quench your fire. suckle hard with lips and hips, take me in throughout the night. let me hear you scream and swear, all the way, if you dare. I will taste and feel your depths, leave you trembling and deep cleft. feed on me and I'll oblige. on your tongue, between your thighs.

#### **Sinister and Sweet**

It's a left-handed compliment, an acknowledgement of contemplation of the corruption your seduction suggests. Soft skin, full lips, your shoulders, your breasts, I hope you take requests because by the end of the evening I won't be leaving much off the menu. This can mean something. This can mean everything. Or nothing. The decision is yours, I am open to the lashing rain of your pain and your pleasure, a measure of treasure that can be locked away or laid bare, like tousled hair on a satin pillowcase, tracing music with your fingertips in the air. I am not afraid of your desires, your fires will not burn me but raise me to an eclectic boil, spoils and soils of the toils of this mortal coil shared and nothing spared if we've shared the sweet heat and the ravenous ravishings we both would prefer, truth told.

#### **Public**

Taunt me with glimpses of your body, with eye flutter fetishes of flirtation. You enjoy this, watching me lean hard into the wall to hide my reaction, the traction of the stone walls barely sustaining my inarticulate delight that you light the night with bright brisance, silk and satin skins shed to litter the floor (more or less) as we pour ourselves into the flushing rush of crush lips and hips and slipping this way and that like cats in a fury. No hurry, but curious to see when and where this ends, if ever. Tell me a secret, I'll trade it for a new one, one you'll never admit even in your scandalous whisperings when I am gone and you still feel in certain corners of your being, my presence, the pleasance of touch held just long enough to be insuperable a force and we run our course loud enough to worry about the neighbors, and laughing about it later.

### expressions

that pout. no doubt it has worked its magic many times on hardier souls that I, for even before you set your lips to persuasion, I am your captive, bound to orbit like a satellite, locked to always face towards you for signs of awareness that I am even out here, cold in the night sky and hidden during the daylight. you are the rare, fair creature who is willing to express herself fully, using the full palette of facial expressions. you say more than mere words with a look and your vocabulary is beyond mine, such that I may need the rest of my life to compile even a modest fraction of the nuances of your simplest smile. or sneer. or frown. or pout. even at rest you are a beautiful puzzle to me.

### I linger at the well

I would spend an hour or two or more, merely lapping softly at the well of life, demonstrating my resolve to seek your joy and your approval of my attentions.

do not mistake my hunger for lack of desire to pour albino fire deep inside you in rhythmic gouts of surrender and release, ceasing only when exhausted.

but, I like it here, the soft taste. the texture. the way you writhe when I find the right spot and rhythm and say my name like an epithet of an ancient deity.

the scent of you is jasmine and sunlight, strange counterpoint to the sunlight of your warm flesh, a feast for the beast within me. and I would draw great pleasure from yours.

#### real woman

a woman. a real woman. an amalgam of a thousand things. or more. the scent of honeysuckle and jasmine between her thighs. the taste of opportunity on her lips. the sound of memory in her laugh. the eclectic lightning in her wit and thoughts. the touch... oh, yes, the touch. her entire body an instrument of music and profound communication beyond merely her eyes and smile and the way her nails and teeth leave marks when she is at her most sated. grace personified. drinker of the white wine and the echo of the divine nature of beauty.

#### In the Heat of the Moment

pink petals on pale skin.
or are they a part of it?
your soft heat radiating
like the aftermath of a dream.
the air is hazy with your scent
and I went a little out of my mind
when you kissed me
with feral intentions
and I felt your thighs against my skin.
silk and satin and linen and lace
falling away or torn aside,
I don't remember which or wish
to dwell on more than this moment.

### **Feasting on a Lover**

I entertain your darkness, as you entertain mine. Those epic moods are food to my soul, sweet and toothsome. A fit feast for poets and artists and those brave souls seeking sustenance in something, someone, more than bland. More than simple nourishment, boring and lacking spice to stimulate the tongue and the palette, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon and a hint of deeper treasures, heat that only comes after many courses, when gluttons slip away to digest what will sustain them, stale bread crusts that were easiest to obtain. Not savoury nor deserving to be savoured, flavoured clumsily with just enough sugar to hide the masala within. I want the flesh, the blood, the marrow untapped, not wrapped in an assembly line, a disquieting disguise.

#### Menu

you have that quality of something that I cannot put to words. as a poet, this frustrates me, but it also tantalizes me like smelling something tempting outside an unfamiliar restaurant, wondering if anything could taste as good as it promises. knowing to trust my senses and drop my defenses and get ready for a fresh and new and unique experience.

### **A Deep and Resonant Purr**

I envy cats their ability
to fall asleep in any position
without penalty or agony
the next morning.
But, waking from deep sleep
limbs akimbo
and your naked, merged form
still atop me
where we did not stop lovemaking
as much as fade to a truce
I will gladly barter
a stiff neck
and a leg cramp
for another moment
as part of our whole.

### **Constant Seductions**

we cross the line each in our own manners throughout a night that fed from evening, an afternoon filled with intimacies, a soft morning we found hard intersect. one of those days (and nights) so rare and fair that we will hold to each others' account. whispers. touches. our proof of life complex with the nature of our very beings.

# **Midnight Musing**

In these quiet and shaded moments I think of you, even when you are not with me. Hundreds of miles. Thousands, even, we blink and the moments pass by, leaves on a tree that grows too swift for us to do more than stand back and watch in discomfort that time will take the path found most convenient and fan these fires, these new desires, until this rime is little more than ashes and memory and we are left to sit in the desert and ask philosophical questions we do not want to know the answers to, curt excuses made for times when I wake you in the middle of the night and take you.

#### **Immortal**

You don't have to lay with me to be immortal. I barter not such amomancies, for that would diminish magic of the human heart, portal to my soul is not beneath sheets of satin, should the price of passion become a rough coin of brass it would diminish the value and the virtue of every kiss and touch, the whispers that pass for eloquence, quenching fires of ebony hue. I will not burn forever, but the ash and soot of my brief flash shall leave a mark in hallowed halls. The flicker casts shadows in the shape of you, put to leave your trace on the chaste alabaster walls I freely mark if now received as communion or refuse my flesh in sacramental fusion.

# **Negotiation**

I would not need to undress you to impress you. But I would like to, anyway. To lose myself in you, as deep as you permit. To not quit when I am sated, for it is your pleasure I will measure myself against. Folding memories and daring to lose myself in merging flesh, purging the demons of doubt. I am slack-jawed with awe at your beauty, your essential sensuality and your honest acceptance of me, not surrender, but a truce of trust. Negotiations continue through the night and the treaty may not survive breakfast, but I am willing to give unilateral concessions of my touch and thickened penetrations. Blurring borders as we work towards a lasting peace.

### **Pale Minstrel**

cold fall the petals of the sky upon the earth, the flowers die, the seasons change their garb and dance along. I'll capture her with barest trace; her voice, her face, her lethal grace, in rhyme, in thought, and this small tribute song.

she knows me best who know me least, makes bread and fishes into feast and understands the essence of my art. her form is fair beyond the norm and to her side the suitors swarm and I have but my distant words, for my part.

haphazard though my tune may be my words are honest and she can see my gentle hands pluck out my plaintive tune. I woo with all that she'll hold and have and offer all and more by halve in hopes of turning winter into June.

## **Snowflakes are Imperfect**

White. Delights of crystalline water. Dancing in the wind. Hiding the shadows in a sheet of reflected glory. Such is the story of our hearts. Damned to melt when we discover we live in the real world. Let winter endure that the rain, impure, might cover up the sleeping sorrows. Snowflakes are imperfect for they are but transient façade. Seasons go on for me and for you. Come Spring I will come for you. And demonstrate the beauty of life.

# **Centigrade**

Whatever the scale, the temperature remains the same. The name does not change the essence, the nature, of my affections for you. Platonic? Hardly. But patient as a monk, resigned to the sound of earnest echoes and the thousand reasons why this would not work. What you perceive as bitter cold I still read as positive and the heat lingers, buried perhaps, but it does not lapse into an unconscious, unconscionable cynicism. It is merely a matter of where you mark the numbers when you place the plate behind the glass that passes for an analog of the dialog we are both sustaining, entertaining the notions of something far towards the other end of the scale. Boiling, scalding, searing possibilities of an arcane heat, against your quicksilver.

# **Banquet of the Vanquished**

I want to get you hungry.

Feral.

The best way to unleash the feast to better consume our fills.

Sating our appetites by whatever means necessary.

Vampyrs in a flood of blood,

red and white,

drawing heat to complete the sweet sweat

with which we initially whet

then wet

our throbbing teeth.

Wreathe us in a turbulent sensation and burn,

burn like bound sacrifices to our own devices.

The price of passion is agony,

raw flesh and the mesh of the deepest measures

of how far we go

and go on,

beyond our perceived limitations,

no more pale imitations

of lust

before the dust has its way

with what we leave

on the table,

barely able to

walk or talk

but the exhaustion is earned.

And the next course served.

# My Fine Fae Lady

Invite me now in, into your tender garden, where rare and unique beauty is to be revealed. Flowers, leaves, fragrance like honeysuckle, jasmine, all the sounds of the soft rain of beauty unsealed. Not requiring, but desiring, a cautious hand, sturdy plow to help ensure tis not overwhelmed by vagrant vagaries of intention unplanned. My fine fae lady, I am not unacquainted with the rituals of your sprouts, needing the care of an empathetic gardener, understanding the necessity of an earnest heart to bear a sustained effort, your approval demanding as I press to your beds and lay root where best to make grow what your heart requires to be impressed.

# Not a dream passes

not a dream passes for me that you are not in residence maybe you are indeed my future if not my present tense

making differences on varying scales knights errant or merely lost in the chaos of the madness changing karma for others' cost

trusting Fae will show the way when the night acquires all our lands seeking more than just the answers seeking more than hearts and hands

wishing I could prove my purpose weirding ways and all and more praying fate will find me raised up and not just scattered on the floor

## **Once again**

In the darkness we see with different eyes drawing our sight from inner strength. The texture of your skin is more profound. Warm. Smooth. Seductive. Your lips, your hips, feeding me in sips of what communicates a subtle invitation amplified and magnified by the sounds. Oh my God, the sounds you make take me to another plateau and drop me: Slow fall and I crawl to the edge to beg for another ride. Inside you is comfort and hunger softer and smoother and warmer than the soul of creation. There is a feral grace in this place. The scent of your skin. The taste of your lips. The texture of your breasts. The sound of your urgent insurgent utterances. God's name not in vain as you drive me insane, then save me from the madness once again.

### Flash and Fire

flash and fire, the desire is the spark, dark and dreadnaught. hot as coals held in your hands just long enough to burn holes in your soul and you wake just long enough to pass out. centimeters measured against the sky and I am lost in an uncertain universe looking for something more than memory. flash and fire, you inspire me, light curves back upon itself then burns cursive holes in the silence of the page. rage against this cage and take the stage long enough for one savage dance. then another. lover who can smother me with your presence and I drown. happy.

### **Driftwood**

would you mind if, for tonight, we just lay beside one another, touching without expectations of the slow descent, way to sated exhaustion, ending in rout of our civilized veneers, animal seeking creation and recreation.

I love more than your body, held in thrall by your smile and kind heart, preparation for the grace of heaven. a prophecy of peace, of the charity of God's spell, kindred spirits navigating the sea of storms, of the mighty waves that will swell to break us beneath their most brutal tide. we tread water together, side by side.

### The Sonnets of Grace: I

Than any spring of deep earth! Beauty sure! You are the nature of passion and peace, argent angel made manifest to cure the sorrows of my brittle soul, to cease my greytint memories and bring colour: Fields of bright blossoms to the horizon! Fed by the cold mineral water, pure as a virgin's first kiss, a kind reason to shield the light of brisant meander that draws our eyes from the prize of real joy to find kindred soul to inspire wonder and break open my heart as an envoy of fantastic land of dreams envisioned. I shall surrender worlds unimagined!

### The Sonnets of Grace: II

I shall surrender worlds unimagined, to pale the Duke's gift to his courtesan. You are more than flesh and fantasy, sinned and again, altar for my desire, plan of a seduction to the royal line.

Temptress arcane and alabaster, heat meets a sweet defeat in your fire divine. Your flesh is as soft as angel's kiss, sweet and otherworldly. Penetrative promise and the persuasion of your innocence, oil and water heated to precipice with the true language of romance, defense I tear aside the lace and silk, false skins, abdicate my throne and atone my sins

### The Sonnets of Grace: III

Abdicate my throne and atone my sins, ruling in façade, fallen force majeure to make request to test the truth of skins in contact to merge, sacred and impure, lightning in your mouth, your lips are prophets in the desert of all false lovers' dreams, the blasphemy of chalk oaths, epithets, the shadow of panthers and curdled creams. Ruling from the boudoir, iron scepter and velvet throne. Lesser immolation to sheathe heat against the pagan specter that makes mockery of subjugation. I would lay aside my red cassock, sinned to be within your grace, to be the wind.

### The Sonnets of Grace: IIII

To be within your grace, to be the wind that passes through you, leaving trace eddies that empower and deflower your heart, spinned dust devils riding out the decades breeze and cyclone, hurricane and zephyr blown from the clouds of your beauty to summon all manner of mischief and legend known to future generations as some one who inspired poetry and envy, lust and worship of pale divinity brought to life and placed among us to entrust us with the secrets of the holy, taught in emancipated flesh, feral skins, in a desert of barren bones that pins.

### The Sonnets of Grace: V

In a desert of barren bones that pins you to the ground. The sound of the sorrows of failed lovers, timid tale of the sins of inadequate passions, tomorrows cast away for the moment, yet unmoved by the logic of the heart or the touch of hands and glands that had not planned unproved strategies, dependent on blind luck such that even the gods laugh derisively. You drew me here to make my sacrifice on your pale flesh, the spill of white wine, free of constraints that might taint the boatman's price, shackled by lips that kiss and hearts that pound the bravest and the boldest to the ground.

### The Sonnets of Grace: VI

The bravest and the boldest to the ground, bound and tormented, rebellion fomented in the name of a goddess, an unsound faith based on predisposed and demented oaths of belief, grief for lost years and tears shed red in crevices of memory. Cinnabar sins, we are yet crippled by fears that grind us down like harpy's emery, sharpening the poignant poniard that will penetrate more than willing hips, the rush, the crush, the flush of release, little kill and faint awareness of endorphin push through to paramour of the romanesque, we are flesh and blood and the arabesque.

### The Sonnets of Grace: VII

We are flesh and blood and the arabesque. Inconsistency, our consistent trait, our beauty and grace conquers the grotesque remnants of our sod-bound uprising, fate and the sound of dripping wax as time burns. But your soul is, itself, beautiful. Time may mark its passage in twists and turns that lay tracks around your eyes, terrible demolitions of our bodies and minds, cursing us our mortality and more. Even stilled and cold, I would hold the binds of ancient oaths to your flesh and heart, lore of my mythos, passion will not unbound in visions from Poe and Lovecraft, each sound.

### The Sonnets of Grace: VIII

In visions from Poe and Lovecraft, each sound, darkness lingers, stingers in the green fields where lovers would lay, only to be struck, bound by dark forces, where hope to madness yields. I seek a deeper prick than mere nettles, a transient insanity of blood heated on and in your altar of where settles only the red blood and white wine, meted injustice for the soft to the savage, a passion play of hungry religion taking communion in forms that ravage one another, the merging division decreed by design, heroes picaresque echoing in chilled depths of souls, grotesque.

### The Sonnets of Grace: VIIII

Echoing in chilled depths of souls, grotesque though our feral entanglement may seem, it is not quanta or the picturesque pretense of an ardent virgin's wet dream, filled with illusions, misapprehensions about how it is all supposed to work when we merge to purge solitude, tensions uncoiled then soiled in a three-ring cirque of your surrender and your demands, made and unmade, the linen, immolative, consume, itself in shame for what was said in the ancient tongues of lovers, suasive in both silence and in eloquence due, with the malformations we are heir to.

### The Sonnets of Grace: X

With the malformations we are heir to it is miracle that we comprehend the frailest of our failings, hearts passed through the baptism of our saddest times, defend our cynicism with doubt and the cold calculus of our barnacled souls, hard as Pharaoh's damnation, denying bold prophecy and the word of God, long scarred by our own illusions that we are fit to pit wits against the fates themselves, mad with our own pain and gaining no acquit in insanity pleas, lost hearts that had fair hope to re-enter the grand circuit: affection and desire, the live wire.

### The Sonnets of Grace: XI

Affection and desire, the live wire, funeral pyre, the spire of the temple we throw down from, fulfilling the desire to both give and take the waking, simple in the equation, but the prayers are long and complicated, speaking in the tongues old before mortals messed it all up, song of Solomon and Kama Sutra, rungs of Jacob's ladder, electrocuting inadequate supplicants on their quest, their pilgrimage, purging the polluting perfume of forgotten blossoms to test purest of scalds; skalds speak our legend, true, that grounds us to the beauty we are due.

### The Sonnets of Grace: XII

That grounds us to the beauty we are due, and this finds our paths a laughing torment. between the poles and pages we wage new dogmas: Who we are and deserve, torment of our inner selves and shelves of scribblings of mad philosophies of God and love that burn away and give to the nibblings of the vermin that infest us, above the marquee moments we aspire to, demanding our due and paying our dues in currency of colding kisses, true to our pretensions, our hearts we will bruise before bursting into eloquent fire, letting slip flip platitudes of desire.

### The Sonnets of Grace: XIII

Letting slip flip platitudes of desire.

More on my lips than words, your sweet essence drips in sated statement of rutting gyre as you cry out to prove that my presence meets your criteria for further feasts.

I make no command, no barter demand of treasure for treasure, for heated beasts do their natures and I will gladly stand glad to enter whatever covenant you offer me, patience is the virtue of the lover. Reticence resident shall vacate to make room for me, anew. Here is proof of my inspiration, sure. There is truth in my eloquence, more pure.

### The Sonnets of Grace: XIIII

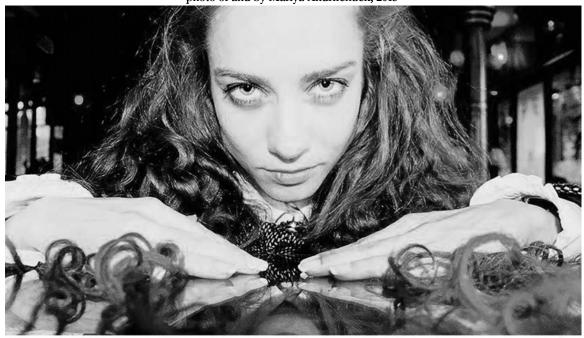
There is truth in my eloquence, more pure than any tantalus flood, a spring struck by a prophet to demonstrate the cure of despair is hope and prayer, beyond luck in the toss of the dice, the price of fools. Luck is but persistence in random models of chaos theory, dreary rules describing a universe near awesome as the peace of your presence, evidence of something grander than science, the glim of the less dim options over the fence into infinite plains of daisies, rim of oceans we swim to, more sweet and pure than any spring of deep earth! Beauty sure!

### The Sonnets of Grace: Diadem

I shall surrender worlds unimagined. Abdicate my throne and atone my sins to be within your grace, to be the wind in a desert of barren bones that pins the bravest and the boldest to the ground. We are flesh and blood and the arabesque in visions from Poe and Lovecraft, each sound echoing in chilled depths of souls, grotesque with the malformations we are heir to. Affection and desire, the live wire that grounds us to the beauty we are due, letting slip flip platitudes of desire. There is truth in my eloquence, more pure than any spring of deep earth! Beauty sure!

# from the book **Cleave** (coming together):

photo of and by Mariya Andriichuck, 2015



cleave William F. DeVault



# **Strange...but Beautiful**

strange but beautiful
the arc of the lark, a curve of unswerving passion
fashioned in jasmine and honeysuckle wreaths
to stop the nosferatu's teeth
from more than a taste
from laying waste
to what, in haste, was imagined love
and some immortal dream of joy
that mirrored what I'd seen in the sun's cleft,
or so I imagined, in hope God had left,
but it came from blood
not the ether that folds cold memory
into the shrouds of distant stars
the better to bind noble scars
strange but beautiful

strange but beautiful
I can sense your presence
but I cannot ken the vector of your approach
and like Hector, I cannot fight
what I cannot touch in the light
swinging blind against the walls
as I kick against the pricks
I would place palms to cool stone walls
and wait your arrival, eyes shut to silence
the shadows of the fires
the shadows of desires
that would blacken flesh and bone
and drag me to the precipice
to dance for the fates my amomancies
strange but beautiful

### **Base Sacraments**

I am not God. for God does not need to taste the sweat of your kisses to remind him of your nature your dreams your needs your beauty.
God is above the stirring in my loins whenever you smile and a small strand of hair falls askew to remind me of how you look stretched out beneath me at the center of a heated joy.

### And.

I would prefer to worship you than be worshipped by you, as I draw purpose from your pleasure.

### I Stand for You

I stand for you and lay for you as wills your perfect heart, plucked from the Earth by time and toil to fulfill patient cause. I beg from you an answer true to my bold suit and part. For diamond hearts and passioned priests the truth is as a dart that pierces deep while mortals sleep to lay the pathway's laws. I stand for you and lay for you as wills your perfect heart, I knew your soul had struck a toll when witnessed from the start: A dutied beauty in the stone ripped out by careless claws. I beg from you an answer true to my bold suit and part. I bleed out love to wash away the stains life would impart and purify the petty lies the fools would curse as flaws. I stand for you and lay for you as wills your perfect heart, The waves will roar and tides may ebb but I shall stand apart from sounding seas and soul's disease that would give others pause: I beg from you an answer true to my bold suit and part. I am not here for a fraction less than what fulfills my art, and your kiss matters more to me than any crowd's applause. I stand for you and lay for you as wills your perfect heart, I beg from you an answer true to my bold suit and part.

#### **Thin Skin**

warm your heart on the heat of my hands as I span long moments spreading oils and lotions of fragrance on your thin skin.

my eyes closed, in wonder, at your softness. your eyes closed, in wonder, at my warmth and the peculiar sensations my touch invokes to be explored later, with more than hands and nothing between us but hope.

# The Satyr's Suit

stay with me a while. lay with me a while. play with me a while and I will make you smile

to the best of my ability.

I will worship you tonight, in the darkness, in the light, whate'er to you seems right. or, at least, to your desire...

let me touch and taste your fire.

let my hold you and explore. let me give you all, and more, let me shake you to your core, let me take you, make you, break you

of all sorrows and lost fantasies.

I will earn your memory.
I will turn you, set you free.
I will burn your depths, as we explore all the pleasures, once denied

you have had to hold inside, waiting for me.

### Genii

I don't want to disappoint you but with my sweat to anoint you as I labour for your pleasure and I savour your delight.

let me peel your self-denial and just lay back for awhile let me measure you for memory while I treasure your release.

for the joy that I will generate will seem radiant as I penetrate into corners of your spirit where now mourners congregate

I am called by invocation to achieve a consummation to slide deep into your body til you sleep as ne'er before

with your fragrant garden tended and your broken heart well mended you can rest within my arms until your cresting hunger calls

# Aside, Astride the Phoenix

bid me enter to your sphere but tell not the world as I draw near that I have come to meet you here aside, astride the phoenix.

speak to me not the shallow myths of words that fell from ancient cliffs to fill the valleys, full of glyphs of warning, warding, wonder.

behold my breath, it burns the wind, that whips through fields where lovers twinned and bade brave bliss for sinners skinned to feel each healing heartbeat.

that you have dared is proof enough that you are made of earnest stuff cuir bouilli, smooth and tough, to shield the unhealed warrior.

enter freely, of your will, that you may share in what we spill then gather up, to drink our fill of the flooded blood of passions.

# **Behind the Façade**

behind the facade where you kissed me once violating promises you and I had made to ourselves and each other not to mention other people who seemed suddenly irrelevant at least for the moment when lips touched and something -somethingarc'd like lightning but much much more pleasant which suddenly seemed a very faded word and everyone who wasn't there that is to say who wasn't me or you only saw a red glow on the horizon and weren't sure if they heard thunder because you kissed me behind the facade.

### The Priest of Passion Serves the Sacrament

break me down take me down that shadowed path where we once lingered, daring fate to let us touch in ways shown sharing in ways known caring about what wordless whims were communicated.

I can smell your attar on my hands and clothes, ancient faded memories that I summon freely heat that feeds this fire that feeds this desire and when you shed your veils I will enter the temple.

deity and the temptress to my fall, all I have - I sacrificed the price of your hunger fed to make me bleed to take my need and let me mark a holy scripture in fingertips on your flesh.

### The Goddess Walks

the goddess walks in her garden unaware that the sun is waiting her whim, grim moments lending impetus to joy, a royal smile on lips known to taste tears. some where in the distance, where dark gives way to grey and time holds sway only for those foolish enough to mark it, a troubadour plays a sweet and barren ode.

she shall serve as sacrifice when forgotten gods of love and lust call for their avatar, surrendering her heart to rule a land measured only in how far I will walk in dreamless sleep between now and the end of all things, making words into wonders for as long as there is language for a song.

for sacrifice empowers dreamers and lovers, that which hovers between birth and death a baby's breath in colours resplendent, transcendent o'er all things, even pain, as the power of light and shadows weaves threnodies into amomancies and nothing is regent but her will.

for I have waited this long for this song, this song of stone and clay and fire and water, this song of memory and hope. praying for transfiguration as an act of will, left behind as the kill of a nosferatu's rage. laying page to wound to stem the life that shall not serve as Ouranos' legacy.

#### Centaur

let me walk to the horizon with you there by my side. I'm not looking to play martyr to some self-consuming pride.

I would ask you many questions and answer all you dare. I will smile at life's imperfections as you brush aside your hair.

there are places on this highway better spanned by teams of two, and I am just to thinking what it would be like, with you.

let me walk to the horizon with you there by my side. I've got gas enough for miles to go if you come along for the ride.

I've got baggage by the bushel as I know you've got as well, I can't promise you good weather but I'd walk with you through Hell.

dreams of the damned and dramas are better lived in lover's arms where you're shielded from the fire by my passion and cast charms.

let me walk to the horizon with you there by my side. let us sleep in fields grown feral where no hunger is denied.

let me walk to the horizon with you there. by my side.

# **Aubergine Confession**

I would trade my white for your red. My distance for your bed. A kiss where e'er you've bled. And I am yours, forever.

You hold me in your sphere. I cannot flee from here, from all that I hold dear: And I am yours, forever.

Move closer in the cold and fear not growing old, our dreams, for time, are sold. And I am yours, forever.

There is room for pain that cuts against the grain, but love, it shall remain, and I am yours, forever.

I cannot promise fate will open every gate, and if I must, I'll wait. For I am yours, forever.

# Dance Naked in the Sky (For the Right Set of Lips)

split second timing turn on a dime and find the prime number at the top burn the walls to the ceiling leave the world reeling don't dare start unless you can't stop

climb the wire light the fire and dance naked in the sky live like a goddess no time to get modest it's a crime if you just try to get by

show me a reason to know that your teasin' is an invitation to dance in the sky I don't like to take chances on third string romances just tell me when and I'll never ask why

climb the wire light the fire and dance naked in the sky come, don't you falter take me to your altar for the right set of lips I would die

### Faerie: Love

seeing you just seeing you fills me with such a sense of something I can only recall if I stretch back my memories to a time when

#### love

was not a proven path to the fate's wrath and I believed still believed in the happy ending at the end of a story of

#### love

what is the manner of this mystery this magic this amomancy that have you shrouded me with so that I would dare to care to

### love

when around every corner on every shelf in every empty pocket I have evidence enough of the bristlethorn nature of the pleasant madness of daring to

love

# In the Strangest Corners of Memory

I will find you in the strangest corners of memory. The way you took your drink and the pattern of cool drops of sweat that formed on the glass as we spoke of nothing as foreplay to an inevitable union, moments in the future.

The texture of the skin on your back when... when you were warm and full of life and me. The way your hair fell in my face when I was too busy with other things to notice, but remembered later, and smiled a slow and gentle memory.

The scent of jasmine filtered through the oils of your skin as you lay beside and beneath me asking for nothing more than everything I had and was and would ever be and I gave it all in joy and hope and dreams and passion undismayed.

The texture of your kisses and the questions you asked with hands and arms and lips and legs and sounds that were not words but spoke infinite eloquences that stole my heart and soul and memory of promises I had made before I saw your eyes and lost the pain of life.

### **Kiss Me**

kiss me fear me not for I want something else than your life. I want your soul, your heart, your warm skin and heated blood to sustain me and fill me. to warm my lips and fill my lungs with your surrender. to bring me to the surface that I may know the taste of life if only for the moments that it remains with you. remembering that you, knowing it would mean your death yet in the knowledge of my desire that runs to love and passion you could not press lips to seal your fate and my hunger and had the courage and desire to kiss me

#### I Find

maybe I will see you sometime when the skies are bright enough to resolve the colour of your hair, inviting touch and much, much more into this sore heart, ancient it seems at times and then you step into my dreams and make a mess of my resolution. the evolution of man to stone is thrown out and I find I find an oddly familiar heat within me, when it should not be, for it died a season or ten ago, a slow death, fried in the workaday electricity of grounded thoughts. but you intrigue me in ways I didn't realize I could still wonder on when I see the image of you, a smile against blue skies where lies are sooner or later overturned and burned fingers heal to conceal all but the memory of pain. you wake me from the fading light and I find I find that the night is not a time for shadows but the touch of you. a consummation to be wished like I wish for air and the sun to rise in the morning, warning me that there are still days ahead when what I have bled with be remembered to me. for such is the legacy of the brave. you make me willing to face the memories and make new ones, true ones, a few ones that we really can't explain, you had to be there but if you were we wouldn't have been doing that the way we're doing that. when I think of you I find I want to see just how good all my other senses can feel when my defenses are down and it isn't a game or the same old patterns of habituated kisses when cupid misses and hits other organs besides the heart. I would lose myself within you to have found have found the truth about the religion of love and lovers.

### **Thunder of Lust**

I want to be the consecration of all your hesitation.

I'm not looking to seduce you or in words to reproduce you as a shadow of a light that burns so bright. I'm not heading for a showdown with my urges, dark and lowdown. and won't walk away if you want to talk away the night.

There is thunder to lay under as the light of heaven leavens all our baggage, for a moment, lost and tossed. I'm not looking just to use you or in words to ruse, confuse you, but know you glow, immolation worth the cost.

I want to be the consecration of all your hesitation. I want to be the first, the last, the best and more. I want to be sent reeling off the walls and off the ceiling and to find my mind defined within your core.

I'm not spitting out excuses for the shadowdancer muses that seemed bright while I lingered in the night, barely living but for the sorceries of the dream. I'm just ready for the static to be more than cinematic, to reach this nosferatu heart with surging, purging light that burns away the mocking memories with photic scream.

# **Yielding to Temptation**

yielding to your fantasies.
skies don't lie and I,
I am caught in your cotton candy kisses,
held soft and aloft
like a prayer that dares eyes to caress
each curve with nervous nakedness
of heart and satin skin,
thin to the osmosis of dreams.
yielding to temptation,
crossing boundaries that bind
and blind me to my promises to be good.
bare feet on infinite sheets of sand
that are more than just a place
to trace our illusions,
the winds whipping us to crown senses drowned
in the elegant whispers
that remind us of what we really yield to.

### My Passion, My Cathedral

I would lay you down in a bed of soft satin, silks and rare pelts, a worthy place to trace our passions for a night's mystery, the history we make more vital than the promises we break, words lost in a sound of breath and small death to transfigure. We slip from the shadows to touch and taste and waste not wanting that had been haunting us from the first inconvenient question that we did not speak but shared in a furtive glance that dealt all our cards to a table you alone could see, in front of me, no barriers to harrier your complicated soul. A thirst to slake in uncursed waters, blessed and pressed to and into you, pure and sure as any christened sacrament in a cathedral, prayers taunting us as words that swelled to let us meld into a shared possession. For I take naught what I do not give in turn and full, to share, to bear and bare all you would take into you, as much as you dare.

# You are a Charity to This Sphere

The thorns you've worn and earned and well, from liars, cheats and dogs of Hell that lay (or sought) beside, inside, and fled from promises made in a jading bed. But all are not as bent as those who made their choice and folly chose to be their path, and earn your wrath and prize their lies with evil laugh. There are those who dare to hold more than flesh, more than moments sold for less than told, to cast adrift this precious soul, this precious gift. For you are a charity to this sphere, of this I am certain, that you are most dear.

#### The Pluck of Pan

I wonder, sometimes, why I feel such draw to be closer to you. Closer with every throb of my heart, pounding in my ears, staging a thaw in those cold corners I swore never to rob of their well-earned silence, experience having been a hard teacher and love is sweet and bitter and complicated, a gentle dance with violent intentions as I know I will meet great pain on the road. Not that I do not think you not worth a hard knock or a hundred, for I can smell your skin from here, sweet and hot and waiting for my touch and kiss, remembered in memories of a future that I may not find in this lifetime. Your gentle heart, perfect to the shape of the wounds that life confined to me in its own mock, dreamt of in lust and respect. Not the respect of a saint, for I have dreamt of carrying you away and laying with you, with fire and a savage affection that would preempt any notion of a platonic thought, a feral desire only made sense of inside you, feeling you surrender to the pleasures of my hardened resolve, seeing you as your eyes close in your own consummations, tender and mad, your voice murmuring prayers made true by your very presence in my heart, my arms, my bed where I would curse the memory of every other woman who has pretended to the heart on which you have fed and found in me something worth the pluck of Pan, giving over to the need to feed on a lover's breath, his small death to bring you back to life as yours awakens in him that which slept, having leapt in foolish impatience, but now your touch cures.

#### **Abdication**

Forgive me my soft sins, a man may fail. But in malice, I am innocent, grave may be my demeanor, but passions pale when measured against my purposed and brave affections for you. Respect and passion, immeasurable and of a treasure unearthed only by your beauty, I've won nothing in this life if not the pleasure of your sweet presence in my day and night until the end of all things. You are birth and death, the breath of angels in their flight as they consider a man's word and worth. I have given mine, and am content I will lay with you alone, until I die.

# The Forge of Aphrodite

like well-earned sweat: wet. we set to settle for nothing short of radiance in the heat of our mutually assured seduction. penetrate my consciousness and impale me on your soul, as deep as you can get. wrap your legs and lock me in, in a skin we twin and thin membranes cannot hold back what we are: a sanctity of desire fire burning away the grey until all that is left is white hot flesh and pink, solferino cravings, engravings on memory in sound and fury, the jury of our own needs, bleeding the taste of jasmine. I want to feel you, heal you, peel you and conceal you from all the pain but this: that we are ephemeral and all that passes in this heated moment will pass, glass smooth water to hide the crest of crashing waves that radiate from within you to capture my flesh and fluid. druidic rituals of fertility and transition, pagan perfection as you take possession of my soul and my erection, laying your claim in a passionate frame and flame that licks

# **Paramour and Nothing More**

away the impurities in the forge of Aphrodite.

An essence spun of red honey and of nightshade. Paramour, and nothing more, golden fleece and jade. Dreams drawn like fevered blood by leeches from a soul. A kiss denied and deified to play its role, lovers lost, crossed to toss their lust to dust and coal. An essence spun of red honey and of nightshade. A touch, a glance, a spirit's dance, so unafraid to leap from the shadows to merge and purge the shade, dreams drawn like fevered blood by leeches from a soul. Thoughts given tongue, tongue given flesh and all control surrendered like an illusion of virtue, stole. An essence spun of red honey and of nightshade. Every player acts, every actor played

a hand or made us what we are, our penance paid, dreams drawn like fevered blood by leeches from a soul. I want nothing more than the paramour not fade on waking, not of just illusion but the whole. An essence spun of red honey and of nightshade. Dreams drawn like fevered blood by leeches from a soul.

# I Will Pass through the Fire

I will pass through the fire my flesh clinging to my bones the smell of ozone and burnt hair my lash-less eyes reopened to see with an even greater clarity and charity I will pass through the fire for your love

I will pass through the fire my hands torched and scorched my feet bare and blistered my silent tongue loosened to speak of the moment when I broke with life I will pass through the fire for your love

I will pass through the fire my coeur rage waging war with self-preservation the hesitation I once felt, melting my doubts, I have lived a good life and if this is the final gate, I have no regrets I will pass through the fire for your love.

### **Hephaestus to Aphrodite**

You are beautiful.

I, deformed.

A god, no doubt, but not one that they burn fragrant oils to gather the favour of.

I am unworthy of you, unworthy of your love.

It burns within me, this passion, and yet it burns before me that for all bonds and bindings you will never really love me.

Just the idea of me.

The lame god, in the forge of souls, hammering shape to metals

I have drawn out of lifeless stone.

You are beautiful.

I, deformed.

Cyrano suffered thus, and ultimately it cost him the woman he loved, who would have loved him back,

I suspect (ask Apollo, he would know).

But he was man and she, woman, we burn at a higher degree, our passions set fire to the skies and people run and scream and dream that their hearts could survive such heat.

But they are not that sturdy.

You seek balance in my malformations.

You laugh and smile and feign passions beyond the novelty of my hideous countenance.

You are beautiful.

I, deformed.

For all your beautiful words and soft touches, I know what and who I am. I know the smell of burning sulphur under my nails and know that my kisses are that of a brute, a thing.

Not a god, which is what you deserve.

I am twisted and I know my place.

Those things which I craft, that is what is sought by those who follow the twisting labyrinth into the hot bowels of the Earth to find me.

Lovely ornaments of silver and alloys I alone can make and master, for I am Hephaestus.

But that does not make me beautiful.

That does not make me worthy of a goddess.

# **Angels Sleep**

angels sleep a shift when we repose, knowing that life goes on and that even sentinels must nod from time to time. and, knowing that I am safe in your arms, and you in mine, they need not watch every moment.

I saw you dance, unconsciously, listening to Ani DiFranco sing about leaving in the morning and the futility of shyness when the clock runs short, like a dead end road between the towers of downtown Los Angeles.

so, ride with me if you dare ride with me if you care ride with me, and your hair will shine with the jewels you tossed in small hand across the open fields when you stopped to contemplate three wishes already well on their way to being granted, by being planted in my garden.

#### **Brisant Revelations**

expect the apocalypse if a vow as sacred as I have taken should prove mutable in the wills and winds and currents of the human heart, stolen from the fires of a Promethean glory unshackled to the punishing stone to atone for the arrogance of hope and love and empowering the juggernaut. actions refracted in colours of a spectrum that runs not from red to violet but from osmium to radium through silver and platinum and gold and rhodium polished to a rosary of alpha particles striking ghostly glowing receptors in a flint and steel approach to making nuclear fusion of lovers' sweat. breaking down the waters to make hydrogen and oxygen, breathing in the latter and fusing the former in a thermonuclear glory that rises like the sun in a heart finally released like Glatisant to stalk the legends of a lost mythology. where the Gods walk only in tandem. as it should be.

# **Close Your Eyes**

close your eyes that you do not see the walls dissolve beneath the silent tears I shed as I reach out and brush trembling lips with trembling lips that seek to speak a truth I have not words well made enough to communicate. but can speak with touch so eloquently. if you will but close your eyes.

# **Tip for Tap**

tip for tap. the crush and thrust of contact made, displayed, paraded in a prayed-for instinct of distinction.

run red, the heart is bled. run red, the heart is bled. and all that I have said is to get you into bed.

chaste chasings on the framework of folly, ornate to innate feelings. irate thought censors sent packing.

run red, the heart is bled. run red, the heart is bled. and all my passions, dead, awake to mourners, fled.

crimson lips to solferino folds, gold to the barter, the starter's pistol for my heart discharges rainbows.

run red, the heart is bled. run red. the heart is bled. and these thoughts are all wed by a weaving of romantique's thread.

tip for tap, the crush and thrust of contact made, displayed, paraded in a prayed for instinct of distinction.

#### Dare We Cross the Rubicon?

dare we cross the Rubicon that lays behind your door? where sheets and skin and perfumed sin shall draw us from the floor? topple our frail dignities of manners and restraint. proves to us this fiery rush is no false suitor's feint?

would you dare to see my scars that run beneath the veil? would you dare release your dreams and climb, where others fail to hold their breath until their death is crescent to their prayers? both barefoot and bare headed, bold, to climb celestial stairs.

where heaven waits behind the gates and passion is the key. where wanting all is not the fall if you trust your destiny. dare we cross the Rubicon that lays behind your door? where sheets and skin and perfumed sin shall call us, evermore.

#### How Would You have Me Touch You?

how would you have me touch you? how soon? how oft? how soft? would you have me lay back on the bed and let you rise, aloft?

would you ask I play seduction so that you can play ingenue? or would you like to take the lead and teach me a thing or two?

shall I wine and dine and sweep you off your feet and on your back? or shall this be a blue jeans thing or a tryst of a darker tack?

may it be to your great pleasure if I insist your essence kissed, that I may wait to penetrate until you have found your bliss?

and would you let me hold you for the night, or for a while, and feel the heat between us and taste the comfort of my smile?

how would you have me touch you? how soon? how oft? how soft? would you have me lay back on the bed and let you rise, aloft?

### **Jasmine and Plumeria**

I will pass my heat through oils and essences held in my hand just long enough to pass my heat into your skin. your soft fragrant skin. every pore every curve every nerve begging touch like a child seeking reassurance. and as I pass my heat into you, the alchemy begins and the thin skin turns oil into gold that you hold, every fold, every plain and ridge and tensing membrane calling my name in silent invocation celebration consecration. as I dare pass my heat into your fires.

### The Philosophy of Dreams

touch me. for I am flesh, as you, given to the same needs for air and food and warmth, communicated between two bodies at rest, touching in all aspects possible. and many improbable, as I pull a cat out of the quantum corner and make it into roses to bloom in arcs of every colour of a spectrum of another sphere as they fill the room with exotic perfumes I brought back with me on a trip to the stars.

sing for me. I will smile and touch your hair and dare to sing along, when I know the words. for we are at best in blended voice and thought and flesh, yes, I recall mere moments ago when I could not tell the terminus between your light and my darkness, as angels averted eyes and we made the case for unity between us. it was yes, it was it was something I will write of when I catch my breath and I can find words unique and perfect and passionate enough.

dream of me. for I dream of you. I dreamt of you even before I heard your voice. before I knew your name. when all I knew was that, by the same evidence that I know that there is a God, you exist and existed and I would find you, even if I had to climb mountains of madness and sail, sail forever, it seemed, on seas of the mediocrity of life. for there is too much to be lost to the world if I was right. if love is and was and will be regent. regret wets sweated sins. but I am a penitent pilgrim, lost on the road to Golgotha. seeking something more than the philosophy of dreams.

### **Damascus, Movement 7**

"Humble seulement en face de Dieu." And so the great I Am must have loaned a reasonable likeness to you.

For I am humbled. Cut down to size, a bite size morsel for digestion in the gullet of the phoenix.

The image of the Maker reborn in graceful secrets, a sadness set in stones of jet and jade and sapphire.

I have cut the stones we selected. I have kissed the hems of the elected. I have sheathed the souls, unprotected.

Wings drawn to launch pirouettes to land amid dry stones and forgotten bones left on the desert floor by the road.

Afterimages of shadowdance. Bright shades casting calculated crimes in stark relief of the honored dead.

"Humble seulement en face de Dieu." So the prophecy and loss, counted in killing stones, is crushed to the crust.

Sacraments in a cul de sac sent skimming over the bleached beach sand dunes that stretch far and away into hope.

I cast the runes in riddles, rhythm'd to force slow staccato memory to telegraph the tempest tonight.

I will worship with my memories, I will worship with my threnodies, I will worship with my vanities. Zeus and Apollo, Odin and Thor, small gods of passion, small gods of war, acolytes on acid etch the night.

Futility folds a hand of prayer and draws, to an inside straight, a queen to take the place of fours and knaves.

"Humble seulement en face de Dieu." I will touch the face of God tonight, and offer earnest prayers in the dark.

### Wine

touching softly the fringe of your hairline, testing the holy waters of the sweat that forms on your brow, even when it is cool, as the fool rushes not in this time, but begs the wine of an earnest heart to age to full flavour and ripe with intoxication made manifest in the last kiss I place on lips begging to be crushed so that the juices may flow from the cask and down the winestems set slightly apart until the toast is given and the thirst is driven from us in a wave of warmth made effervescent by sacred words spoken between the press of life.

#### **Dram**

the smallest unit. beauty and terror in trace amounts.... it counts for little to our senses. but its impact is immeasurable, for it is undetectable and thus gets past our guards. shards of the fractured crystal heart of a forgotten dragon. flechettes that forget nothing for they are soulless, like so many lovers. but I have seen your fire. even banked, it burns on... and I will warm myself one day when amotations are again allowed in the dreams of the waking dead. until then, let us drink our drinks of trace elements. and I will teach you alchemy of the heart.

### **Damascus, Movement 3**

aphrodite does not barter her beauty for hollow promise. wisdom girds glib eloquences in a veil of truth, the sooth that soothes us like the blood of aloe fresh cut from a garden where we swore we would never walk again. jasmine. a thought slides like electric lovers across a sea of tranquility where the dust is kicked skyward by the blue flames and boots of the explorers. I awaken from the dream. sightless. paralyzed. the cold catalepsy illustrating the fear of death I had forgotten. but there is an incandescence in the darkness. and, for once, I sink back to sleep, aware of God. and cognizant of the pattern in the tapestry as I await Rome. content that Damascus was no illusion this time.

# **Sparks, Like Frozen Lemons**

caught at first glance.
a chance attraction
like a wanderer between stars
caught in the gravity well
of your incandescent eyes.

a sweet smell that draws me in, seven powers invoked to choke my last struggles. a vanity to guard a sanity long lost. the cost of a vagabond heart.

sparks struck. the kindling catches. and it matches the fire sweeping across the dry grass of a solitary soul. fed by the wind of dreams returning like the dragons on the horizon.

# In the Arms of the Dragon

I kiss the beauty of your complexities. your scars are a familiar terrain to my lips, cut as they have been a thousand times for greater and lesser crimes unpenanced. I do not doubt your beauty and in the arms of the dragon you fit like a gem in the forehead of a smiling Buddha, alive and dreaming of new winds yet to blow and yet you seem to know where, if not when they will take you, make you all that you are already in the arms of the Dragon.

#### **A Summoned Fire**

claim for me your tattered soul that leads your form to wander, soft, on bare feet to the window's light (to shroud your curves in barest light) that I should send dark prayers aloft to be with you, and play a role, of conquered and the conqueror: the paramour you can't forget, who brought his heart without remorse to walk your life like challenged course, and share with you, without regret, a passion damned forevermore. allow me all that I desire and I will share a summoned fire.

#### Monument

I crave a cup. a bowl. a mug of your heart's steel. unsheathed before by mortal or god for rage or lust of things both unneeded and forever unreal... it is the quintessence...and the dust.

dreams do not stand before you and call the blade. dreams do not walk or breathe or love you as I do. and can. and will, if given just a moment's shade from the moon of pain and the stars that lie.

my words shall be eternal. syntax monuments of you. beneath the tread of centuries, stone shall fall. paint peel. music rise to ears long deaf. but now... and from this night on...you are immortal.

#### **The Unicorns**

Please come awhile, remain and play. The unicorns won't come today. The faeries and their virtued kin shall stay away, to paint my sin. with ancient red and angry fire.

Please come to me and linger, please. I do not mock, I dare not tease. Just bring with you an honest smile and share with me, for all the while, a love of life and true desire.

The unicorns no longer guard the meadow just beyond my yard. They snort with shame and true disdain upon a hope of ages' pain and brand me, by their pride, a liar.

### The Faceted Sphere: One

the comfort of your kiss. so innocent that unicorns could watch without grief. so tempting that, for a moment, a brief aroma of brimstone flirted with my senses. there is mystery here, mystery and madness that begs me to hide from the call of questions best left unanswered and unasked...veiled confessions that carry within themselves passion and sadness. an ending without a beginning...an embrace shared by lovers in an alternate reality passes by. and beyond. the riddle smiles at us and we smile coyly at bonds that cannot hold us in this sphere... dreams and nightmares undared.

# from the book **Cleave** (splitting apart)

#### Nemicorn

...and in my willful innocence I slit the fragile throat of the Dreamhart, the nemicorn that bore me to my Rubicon. Its blood, a shaft of crystal whispers, gave amotation to the feelings I feared, and slew, out of time now gone.

the sniggering empaths capered no more, but lay in pain among the orchids...crippled by the nemicorn's gentle acceptance of my treachery and butchery. that placid brain caring not for a vengeance of the visceral.

Dreamhart knew that time would slay me, time and regret that would be mine when my all-too mortal form failed in the icy waters, when I found my strength was set against powers beyond me. when passion paled.

...and in my willful innocence I slit the fragile throat of the Dreamhart, the nemicorn that bore me to my Rubicon. Its blood, a shaft of crystal whispers, gave amotation to the feelings I feared, and slew, out of time now gone.

### **My Electric Lady**

dance for me, my electric lady. sing a song that gently soothes my soul. tomorrow I must leave your world again, my love... as I strive to reach this endless journey's goal.

I once gave up my poor and mortal birthright, so that I might touch the sky and see true things. my love, I'm not so sure I would have started, if I could have seen the pain this voyage brings.

once again, my electric lady, touch me and bring forth my too-rare smile. for the moment I am just another mortaland a little love will last me quite a while.

if we had only met before the present, and what is gone had made me what I am, a love would be that all who live might envybut I cannot come back this way again.

for the final time, my electric lady... give me all that I may take within my vow. tomorrow is my child and a gift to the starsand the night is just my brother here and now.

# The Reich of Self-discipline

you are alone because you choose to be alone. I am alone because you choose to be alone. the balance is not there, but the justice is. truth like a peach, crimson with overripeness, nectar oozing in rivulets of pink sweetness not unlike the last feast of passion I will ever taste. memories unerased by the passage of time, the message of crime uncommitted. unremitting love. sad. as sad as a clock's song of solace. less than the truth, more than a lie. we cry in corners hidden from the watchful eyes of our internal, eternal, infernal critic. epic and poetic epigrams that slam doors of opportunity as the fruit slowly slides from its anchorage and falls. falls. falls from the summit of dark kisses and the joy of love play into the isolation of the hard earth amid the bitter blades of sawgrass and the Reich of self-discipline.

# **The Common Tongue**

the orthography of poets belongs in poetry. not in words spoken in pain or anger or fear of losing something or someone held so dear that you feel death upon you. that is a time for the babysteps of simple words, where commonality is more likely true. a basic tongue where truths are not garbled amid the noise of well-meaning friends who read letters like Rorschach tests and listened that night you raved until late, finding hate in wounded love and bitter tears.

# Will You Be with Me Tonight?

will you be with me tonight when the demons come? all the doubts running like molten wax from the wick of my heart, trimmed too tightly by anxious hands... holding me against the lost causes I sold out for you and your eyes, spinning webs that I can never cut, never tear, never touch for fear that you might one day awaken and realize that there is someone in this world besides yourself.

### **Votive**

the cycle cuts both ways and the haze that lays upon the sky falls in cascades unafraid of your perceptions. conceptions, missed and made, kissed and played for a fool, held in continuous catalepsies.

the promise makes a mark. stark realizations evoking amotations in the mouths of children reaching for the golden apples, sold and consumed in fists fitful and frail. the sail of the horizon turns away, if only in the dimlight.

the riddle takes its toll. soul food for the role we all play in the dance. chances exchanged in dances made to execute a single turn. and we burn. oh we burn with incandescent passions, fashioned in the image of our gods, however we build them.

the memory remains to tell. and we will share it when we dare again to feel something less than the most that we toast our fall over, the wine of wisdom running across tongues made numb with the spices that twice as oft as not have burnt our lips for a draught of heaven.

# The Frost of III-remembranced Things

sacred whims, foresworn this night, we banked them in the dark to hide from sight a blessed light in which we shield our mark.

a print that hands and solemn bands can not and never steal. a kiss, amiss, and yet in bliss, to, by this choosing, seal.

in autumn I did drop my plumes and slowed to sullen pace, and barely made the sheltered rooms to sleep a winter's brace.

and comes the spring on powdered wing to wake me from my grave, to test the mettle of this thing we fought and sought to save.

### The Taste of Remembrance

you reminded me of memory. not a memory. but memory.

that twisted lift of something. something something caught on the roof of my mouth like peanut butter.

but it is a soft mystery that wafted in on winds I had not smelled since midnight in Venice, with the jasmine and the dreams that coiled in eddies of air caught in the shadows that melted into you.

true to your nature. true to my hunger.

your shoulders bare to my touch. your eyes closed to my thoughts. and all else open and warm and something like music. something like music when it comes upon you suddenly, but beautifully, like a lover at first waking.

and memory tasted a lot like your lips.

### The Patchwork Skirt of My Love

the sound of soft fingertips across the strings of a lute. strumming the memories. humming the melody of life. and I am lost in the possibilities of your presence, pleasant, peasant prayers that lead to the summit of the mountain in the distance, where legends reign.

kings cannot know this brandywine. princes pass perplexed. and all the bishops seem ignorant of the nature of God when their ignorance of the crux of creation is displayed, paraded in the sudden dance of a smiling child by the fire. and I am lost in the reverent reveries of this revelation.

play for me that melody, the one you tried to teach me, you tried to reach me with when I despaired of lost love and the angels and faeries all seemed annoying pinpoints that pricked and sticked and stole the moment that was mine and you came for me, barefoot and arrogant, like a poet.

and the fires swam into the sky and I, I was reborn. torn to pieces and re-assembled like a patchwork skirt to brush your bare legs in the summer heat and to defeat the angry winds that would come down from the mountains, mounting the horses of hoarfrost to charge your charms.

I live now, in more than just abstract recollections of a score of forgetful lovers who would not give me second thought were it not for the trinkets of my words they wear as bright badges as they tell their tales of the pale blue moon of memory. and they don't wear the patchwork skirt of my love. or play the lute.

#### **TRANSCENDENCE**

the heavens are in heat tonight for this penitent, penetrative dream.

the iron lion stands astride memory. mantichore wings of black lace fragments of a leather lost to the weather of whim. to him alone is there an accounting.

countdown.

grey skies to brown toxic fumes as the hypergolic moments when soul and intellect touch in the ceramic chamber of a nautilus heart.

the skies scream aside in a fictional friction of breath drawn out to thread like taffy pulled too long. an obit of an orbit, undecayed as the patina colossus pulls free his lame heel from the grounding earth and raises high the last romantic verb.

liftoff.

and I am gone. gone beyond imagination. a consecration of madness sold in gold and honeysuckle silver. quicksilver slowed to sublimate into a crystalline matrix of time.

farewell. farewell.

but it is no longer my concern. for I burn tonight in orbit no longer. stronger than an epiphany made construct in the shallows of an id.

# **Into the Grey**

I can't imagine love unless it is cast in the image of you. Graven images of joy and peace, telling me all that is true. But you have slipped into the grey. And you have nothing left to say. And you won't be coming back again. have forgotten what it was like when... I can't imagine love. I have lost my way, and all I can say is that you are deity to me after a long night, watching blackness melt away. But you have slipped into the grey. And you have nothing left to say. And you won't be coming back again.

must live in violent silence 'til the end.

# In the Morning I Will Be Gone

in the morning I will be gone. but who says a night can be measured in hours, the tender splendour of light at rest when the zest and the best of the world falls into small corners to be pressed together like pages in a journal full of wildflowers.

in the morning I will be gone. because that was the deal we sealed in wordless words heard only by us in purely furtive looks, nooks and crannies of our revelations filled with all sorts of lies we tell ourselves because the truth hurts too much, too much.

in the morning I will be gone. and you will launder and press and fold and put away the memories that seemed so important when they were being made, fading to jade, pages that never yellow as we never look at them except in the darkest of nights.

in the morning I will be gone. but who says a night can be measured in hours the tender splendour of light at rest when the zest and the best of the world falls into small corners to be pressed together like pages in a journal full of wildflowers.

#### I Will Come for Tea

I will come for tea, as promised, to make certain you are well, in your exile, hiding out from the complexities and vexities that got in the way of who you wanted to be.

I will bring a small, lacquered box, which I will take with me when I go, leaving behind the gift of this year's visit, always there, but never the same and something of a mystery.

I will come for tea, as promised, and you will show me your garden, a source of pride and life and the colours you draw upon to paint and write and give us sight into the world you rule.

I will walk the cliffs with you, the sea crashing with practiced rhythms that we will have to adapt to if we are to speak with anything more than eyes and the occasional touch to shoulder or wrist.

I will come for tea, as promised, never making the offer I once made, for you know it is still there, like a floorboard that creaks when stepped on and never needs to be spoken of, unless you want to say "yes".

# **From the Parapet**

the minstrel said
"the first cut is the deepest"
but I am not so sure...
as the only proven cure
for a broken heart
is to wrap it in swabs of clove
to desensitize the nerve.
and I will not surrender
my grandest passions
even to not remember
the feeling when the blade
hits the bone
and cuts through
to the marrow.

like last time.

and every time.

for the heart feeds or withers. so let the candles be lit. and the tapestries hung and the windows opened to let the night air and the garden paths of stone bear the tread of the next fair woman who will share the whole who will bare her soul who will dare control the stallions of Apollo as I brave the cliffs in the name of love.

### **Love is an Howling Beast**

love is an howling beast. consumed by rage that cannot hate. fate, sealing wax and clay and stone o'er bone and blood and flesh. yes, flesh, meshing in memory. memories born of hope. torn to grope in darkness, when what you need bleeds out in the gutters as silence utters a grave pronouncement. a riot act, a solemn pact stacked atop distant mountains too far to see more than featureless white. I would peel back my own flesh with raw fingertips to know again the texture of her lips the scent of her hips and to not have as mocking memory the trips to the well of her heart. I am that grotesque statue left in silent field for future generations to wonder on the purpose of.

## **Sisyphus and Prometheus**

this is not a love poem. for love does not lay upon me like sweat and air and the sour taste of rain.

it is a moment captured like a firefly and left in the jar too long to survive.

but it is an honest thought and it retains at least the shape and substance from whence it came.

pain. self-pity. loathing. a world weariness like poison driven in with careless needles to steal what little remains.

### Threnody for Times Now Past: 3/17/1979

the loom of doom had woven us together...we who are anathema to reason, the ending of a season of hope. I would not be able to cope if not for you, my dreams would be sterile and cracked. the bags are packed. I despise the coldness that wraps us in its cloak... I choke back the lachrymal emissions... our positions are self-revealing. big boys do not cry... but they can die.

the feast is done.
the beast has gone and left us...
so alone we listen to the breeze...
the thief flees and leaves us to measure the loss.
I can not. shall not.
dare not count this the end.
never was there such a friend.
call upon me. fall upon me in times of pain.
more remains than may be acknowledged in this moment.
the seed still lives.
but the shoots are now trimmed to encourage proper growth.

#### A Vile Attar

Deceit is a vile attar. Avatars cut to the heel, sealing the cryptic stonework with words absurd and brittle. Spittle trails, the banshee wails, and the sails are torn apart.

A heart pulses equinox... locks piqued with unsteady hands demanding the ransom lost, tossed aside in pride or rage. Waging a war for its own sake, taking the waking to die.

And I, I am still aware - faring better than I thought. What I have learned I will keep, sleeping on a sea of dreams, reams of the truth unpublished. I am better than I thought.

#### **More Than Flesh**

Rome was an illusion, this time. bleached walls and the smell of cinnamon carried on my sleeve, leaving me a mirage dissipating in the cooling light of evening.

I am reconciled to this, a virtue of my age, a virtue of one who never counts love given as a waste of a perfectly good present, for the value is in the one who gives it freely.

the cold catalepsies do not return. I have passed the third marker on my way beyond the Pillars of Hercules and out and away. the grey stain as a scar worn as a badge of honor.

to sail for the horizons, hands rough on the ropes with which I steer these sails of patchwork dreams, unseasoned no more, but aged and worn, tempered by the sun and the breath of Aphrodite.

I smell the fragrance of freedom, a lie unwound, but a moment's intoxication to be bartered for a soft hand and a smile that touches more than wind, more than lips, more than flesh.

### **Waiting for the Pentecost**

there is nothing sadder than the persistent scent of your fading attar. the sheets, no longer so warm and pampered by your frame, sorrowed. but not as downcast as I am, clutching aroma'd memories to a scar where once was a heart, fiercely pierced and glad to bleed unborrowed emotions, potions imbibed in subtle sips not just to sample, but to prove the leisure of the treasured pleasure to be measured in infinities. a resurrection perhaps to be as prophesied in your eyes, to move me to the transfigured instant of passion and purpose, or to disease a soul already spread thin on wings of wax and stolen feathers. as I am frail, so is the sun an inconstant lover, comfort in winter and the furnace of the crucible of doubt in summer's span, never more than less than welcomed according to the need of the lover. and I have trusted skies too deeply to not regard the rose's kiss a true friend before evidence of thorns is regarded in accepting the legacy of you.

### **Shroud**

you are the shroud I shall be wrapped in when my time is passed to speak for myself and my words are twisted in wormspeak for future generations to puzzle over. "did he really love her?" they will ask and I will have no way of replying to correct misunderstandings caused, as oft as naught, by your words and actions, the shroud about my decaying legacy.

oh, to be spoken of in truth and not puffs of pale smoke and pink meringue memories that lay upon sheets long discarded to fade like serenades of a lost love, echoing only in the ears of those who heard them, raw and true and through the bedroom walls where we spoke them in inarticulate wonder. I am bound for dust and ash and curiosities that can never be resolved, even by death.

#### The Bottom of the Bottle

at the bottom of the bottle lay the final wishes. irrecoverable, painfully arcane, buried in regret and the ruby blue faceted glass, a prison for what was once a man. now vivisected for whimsy and whatever sustenance he surrendered too gladly, madly shedding skin and sin for brittle reality that was always just in the next pair of eyes that perceived him, trapped in this lifeless state, waiting for the redemption from his own regrets. forgiven of God, but not by man, or woman, damned to be bound in a metaphoric maze where love is a bandyword posturing children abuse in their mad rush to be grown into a society where grace is perfidy, power is abuse, and pretty butterfly lies are best forgotten before the mourning.

### **Final Sunday**

I am cast out.
orphaned.
left for dead by the side of a wide road
so that others can swerve
to miss my fading form.
nothing warm
comes from this.
another legacy of ashes
left on my tongue
the taste of dung
and vinegar
from an apple orchard
I had once considered
a sanctuary.

the colding feat.
I am incomplete
and competing for sustenance
is not in my nature.
I will drag myself
into the dark
that I may not offend
those for whom
pain
is too intimate.
and I will find
myself. unbroken
once I fit
all the pieces.

drinking stagnation.
the hunger unabated.
but I will bind my wounds.
plant fists to earth and roar.
sore in a thousand places.
it is good you do not
have to see me like this,
the tattered, battered man,
the orphan of Aphrodite.
but I will not change
my coat of arms.
I will still be a priest to your divinity.
and I will love you
every time I feel my hollow soul.

#### **Bohemia**

the wind is warm. formless and granular. the sand whips the masts of the ships that never sailed, failed voyages dry docked and stillborn, worn like a mason's hands. the road is unmarked, lightly traveled, a pilgrim's afterthought.

the old man, blind in one eye, shades his brow and whispers a solemn greeting, resplendent with time and tragedies. "welcome to Bohemia", he rasps, dry lips spitting each word like watermelon seeds at a long forgotten 4th of July party.

he rises. joints stiff and sore from the scores of times he has risen out of common decency, even for those unworthy. dignity and respect, reflected in a genuflecting smile, warmer than the armor of the amourist, or something like it.

he motions you to sit and offers a scone or some warm tea. "I remember what is important", he says, the mind still in motion. the chairs are wooden, plain and solid, the paint scratched and the table patched more than once out of necessities.

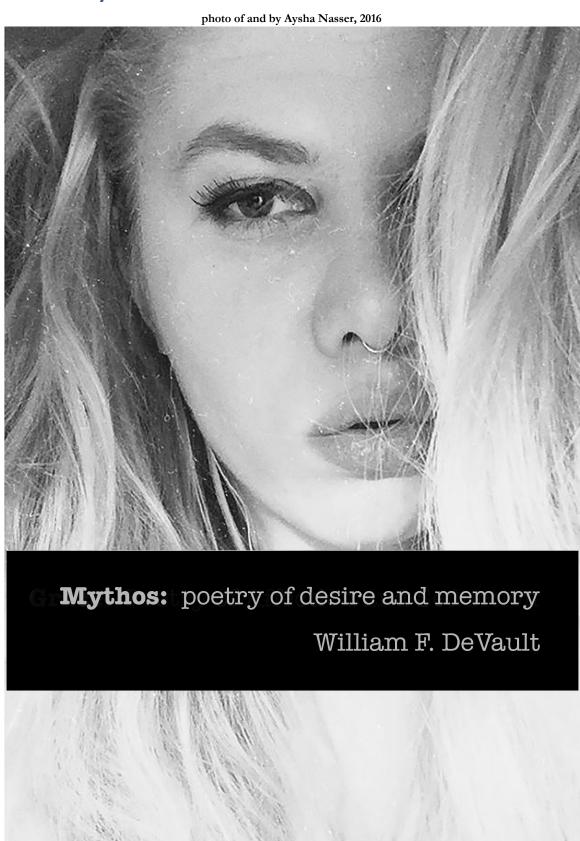
the wind continues to sing. And then he speaks, rapidly, words unheard anywhere in the universe anytime before. the poet's tongue dances though trances and transitions, memories and good intentions, untended and befriended.

the wind fades, the sun sets, and the voice holds court, sport of the mind, grinding the fist sized rubies to dust. then blowing them away with a puff of breath, mocking death and the stuff of riddles and religions, pigeons sacrificed.

the final syllables are what you came for, the final stanza. you strain to catch your name in the arcane utterances. it is in there, you are certain, the curtain cannot fall without your acknowledgment in the dance of the decades.

you raise your eyes to thank him for his courtesy, despite all the unrelieved grief and find him gone, leaving behind only skin and bone and the riddle of manuscripts memorized and now gone on a wind that resumes its mocking wail, outside.

# from the book Mythos:



### **Prologue**

Where the sun rises at the hands of my brother, carried across the alien cinnamon sky, we won't die. No. We shall be immortal, not born of mother, but of the match observances of minstrels, the lie of our creation obscured by the rabble as they fade and pass into valleys of hungry legends, sharp teeth to pierce the ripe skin but blunted on the pink jade that we are shaped from, carved in perfect relief.

This is Olympus and Asgaard, the homes we ascend to, Avalonian ripples in eternal seas we seize in cupped hands to drink deep the draught of true nourishment, it burns through the shadows of Plato and each nursery rhyme that brands fleur de lis and Sumerian scripts no one can translate as the tongues are forgotten, echoing in eternity until the trouvere finds truer words that require the weight of the penitentiary of the centuries to resolve mystery.

Artemis and Aphrodite mud wrestle for the fate of virtue that Kinsey declared as smokescreens of burning hearts, dampened cramps in the psyche of the tangled few who cut through the Gordian hypercube to lube parts for the sacrifice, nice memories if segregated from bookends that carry the prologue and aftermath, integrated essence, the presence of the granularity of the particular odds and ends we collect in curious quests to find the purpose of our presence.

#### Woo

There is darkness that I bring to you and yet I bring lightness, nonetheless, to protect you and to reflect you in my words and life and daily press in the book made of each fallen leaf and clover we take so we recall clarity and charity, belief that love is regent against the fall. to lay with you each evening, wake with you there, to smell your blessed essence on my hands and in your hair, to take what I need, give tenfold to your presence. your heart is yours to tender, to share, to hold in sacred trust until dust is the path and legacy. prepare a bed as adrift or to burn thrust as is your desire, for the fire burns only when you breathe upon it, heat given only by permission, turns kindling into inferno, the sweet promise of emerged, encouraged touch of a flower blossoming bright to bind and blind and find in manner such to redefine our passions, anew.

### the madness of the elvish goddess

Some would flee, but it is not for me to judge the vow I take, I make my way against the flow to find the path to her that may not be a way that mortal men should take if they would survive the sweet grind of the uncertainties that pierce our flesh and thoughts. we are not set but we determine the outcome in coeur rage and the passions fierce that burn us to the quick, we whet our base appetites, overcome.

#### fusion

in the magma of your kisses I am melted as a stone, to purify my essence, all my doubts to full atone as a lost and blinded acolyte to worship past the veil on an ocean of emotion to set course and set the sail to touch soft against your beauty. to curve into your core. to leave marks upon the corridors that you will let explore.

#### dread nemicorn

not a doppelganger for a past lover something, someone, new and unique, like a dread nemicorn to consume the paisley powders that dance on your breath as every small death fills you with life and a wicked will to curl like smoke around your tensioned, heated core to draw more until I am hollowed out with hallowed shout to taste in haste and lay waste to all your barriers that the beauty that you share and surrender makes me remember what poetry is supposed to taste like what dreams are supposed to feel like what legends are supposed to be

### arrogant tongue

where the merest brush of breath turns to kisses the tip of an arrogant tongue takes tentative taste then strokes not unlike savoring an ice cream cone with hungry delight but warm and sultry as your fingers grip my hair and you grind against me urging me on with feral sounds and the way your hips sway when you feel the fire rise between the thighs that alternate between trapping me tight between them or spreading wider the better to invite me in to feed for as long as I wish to your eventual and repeated pleasure

### sultry summer afternoon

sultry summer afternoon
when we generated our own heat sweet and substantial
in a sweltering shelter I took my time
finding the shadows
the welcoming darkness inside you
where you drew out my storm cooling yourself beneath me as you drank my sweet tea
of release
in ceaseless sips waiting for the night to lay a blanket on us
under which we would not sleep

### on the edge of night

on the edge of night the edge of light the fleshes give up with a fight and the bruised hearts illume with a radiation that speaks more than corners and curves

pure light unbending and blending greens and grey and they play against each other to make ruby-blue and white, white beyond your purest motives where minds sublimate and fate is our word for what we want more than anything else we've ever wanted

taunted by the calls of the priests in meaningless cants and chants for that is sound, not electromagnetic waves that fiercely pierce even the ether and neither of us is in a hurry to scurry away from the pure light found only on the edge of night

#### ethereal eroticism

burn my flesh into a trace.
peel the diamonds from my face.
the passion, captured in light,
breaks the sorrows with delight in the wavelengths infinite,
beyond reds and greys, finite out of the necessity,
mocked and marked solemnity, merge surges inebriate
of which we now radiate unashamed in naked form initiating the warm.

### Desire, dire and sacred

It would be a lie to deny that what drew me first to you was your unique, immortal beauty. You possess grace and more than a little sensuality, provocative and evocative woman-girl.

I have dreamt of you in wet, inhuman heat, feeling your legs wrap about me, when I am inside you. Whether I am tasting or penetrating you, you are Eros and ingenue, draining my pain and feeding me joy.

To hold you to me and lose myself in hour upon hour of delight, exploring you, worshipping you. Expressing to you the passion you kindle in me like a bonfire. Desire, dire and sacred.

### petals touch

petals touch. lip to tip then kiss to dream, laying truth along the seam between your thighs. veils that part. gentle touch to fire's bloom, finding room to merge inside you with no surprise.

### **Diving Deep**

I would hold my breath a lifetime to reach the depths of your soul. No regret. No doubt.

The patience of a lover committed to your beauty in all the turbulence and mocking silence.

Aware of the risks.

Aware of the fury of the demons in the darkest silence.

Given to be taken and swallowed whole.

Out of passion and respect.

### demarcation (pause)

the demarcation between the lemon meringue of your hair and the pink meringues of your flesh whipped into peaks by my attention and intention leaves me little room for error and little time for wiser patience as you call me in. in to the garden of your beauty. petals dew-swept where they wept in colder nights but by the rights granted me when you enchanted me you do not sleep alone tonight if sleep is on the agenda or just a feverish pause when the claws you left in my back won't grow back as quickly as I shall and the sacrilege of your prayers murmured when I kissed your shoulders on the path to enlightenments as to the color and the taste of the fragrances inherent in your blossoming and my release and surrender deep inside you as requested and unprotested throughout the night that lasts beyond the Bavarian tests of your passion and fashion for pleasure.

### lightning and thunder

lightning and thunder take me under to sunder flesh and soul best to control me a part at a time turn on a dime and make a meal of my zeal to not conceal my passion for your insurrection a real affection overturning and burning the ruins of years turning into decades turned to dust but under the crust the volcano god is still evening the odds

### pride and perfect kisses

brave and beautiful.
a majestic bird of mythology. you.
spreading your wings
to soar high above the binding grind of everyday care.
I will watch you
and watch over you as long as you allow making my bed
where you are keeping you warm when the night is cold
and finding a religion beside you
inside you
with pride and perfect kisses.

### Persephone

night is but a state of mind I find like sorrow or love when the glove is threadbare we touch with fingertips the heart set apart wait with expectations that will not be met by anything less than the truth. removed from the currents adrift a rift between what is what should have been what could have been but for the tiniest of misspoken words heard with cautious ears translated into pain that the mourning comes to seal us without light without hope not even a goodnight kiss from lips that never were except in exceptional dreams.

### **Xochiquetzal**

your breath is intoxicating evidence that you are alive and as it quickens it amplifies life to a sacred mystery to be untangled as we tangle like writhing lithe liars speaking the truth only with flesh and inner spirits released in the task caskets of our transfigurations. Veils sail away in a shower of flowers, butterflies and the manifold marigolds strewn in your path.

ruby blue and true, blood floods and courses, forces we cannot deny try as we might to fight the surrender, pretender to a false immodesty. transcendent precedents swept from the table as soon as we are able to catch our breaths and affirm our deaths in a celebration of a thickening taste we placed like communion wafers of an intimate religion.

leave no stone unturned, our band and brand is burned into the cracked and sacked altars stacked high in our inquiry, our diet of wyrms wherein we throw down our theocricide ride our preferred angels into the heavens on until morning becomes another charade parade of the pretense of civilization we shed last night.

### Holle

there is a natural order even in the most unnatural of things

like you like me

left behind, bereft of wisdom, we are the rich and the raptors we steal hope and cope with the life before the afterlife as if it matters

like you like me

the benevolence of sufferings that drives, drives us like cattle into the shadows to seek our desires in corpse lilies and the occasional penetrating rose sacraments of the fearless lovers

like you like me

#### **Venus**

the veneration of Venus, Aphrodite to the barbarians who cannot pronounce the simple shibboleth, religion and cult, mystery of the purging urges that surge in wet and electric arcs that make stark our most sacred vows and open us to desire.

fire, tongues of flame that lick us sick and slick to better complete the intricate simplicities of our measured pleasures. every inch a phantom fathom that lowers us into a purgatorial pit from which we can crawl out later, for we are here for the show

#### **Bast**

Cast your spell and I will pretend to fall under it. But I am here for my own reasons, my own seasons calling my whim to willful need to bleed my seed as deep as you can survive as you summon life. I will leave inside you more life than ten thousand spheres brought to tears by the awareness of their sterility.

crystals crack and the gestures wrack limbs, lips, and fingertips that slip through holes in the night to weave the venom of our most virulent whispers, blisters on the black wards you scored in fire on the very stone I am touching even now, against all your oracles and ordinances. the sky dances.

and we are still. catching breath.

#### **Qetesh**

awake, arouse, and slake the great hunger you burden me with waiting for your revelation your consecration in tenuous lips and grinding hips that meet and grind to throw sparks and find the gem at the core of mere stone formed of the core of stars and reawakened in the sacrifice of our solitude in rude ecstasies

### Saga

never less than friend, trusted and welcome in any season, for any reason. an equal and a fitting sequel to the memories that are unworthy passion you reflect upon, when life is waiting for us.

rowdy and refined, of merged or conflicted mind, we enjoy our adventures, delighted to not have to walk these rocks and roads alone. we find wisdom in absurdity and something epic, every day, to astonish us.

#### attar of the altar

in these darkened spaces, traces of our other senses explore and implore, soaring into atmospheres where tears are lubricants and the watercolors of our painted, sainted dreams. traces of our faces that develop in silence when we express with a language that existed before there were words. cool sheets heated to warm us, form us into a mythic beast of two hearts, parted only by the thinnest of excuses.

#### sin

I can sin with you from eight thousand miles away, trading day for the familiar architecture of minutes after midnight when we lay down our shame and blame only ourselves for the roar of silent synergies, full lips and hips that grip with a fervent hunger to be filled and fulfilled in a chaos born of intent spent on pale idols that melted in the rain, sandstone and salt that wasn't our fault we wanted to believe in

#### amomancies

words are shadows in the light of the sun, albedo neglected, intentions reflected and perfected as I whisper dark delights that you want to hear in the most irrational moments, infinity and aleph, the philosophy of the human heart and soul, filtered in blood and the flood of subtle urges, urgent to be spent on a street corner when the hunger is not honed by honest consideration of hope and the rope we hang ourselves from when we let others tell us, sell us, on what they say we want. the religion of the gullible. kiss me, again, when you are ready to share and care and dare with a dervish passion, the taste of sweat on your skin, secret words that will never be revealed as they are concealed by the darkness, parked around the corner, drawn like a patient smile of pleasure measured against the legends of our amomancies and our desires.

### lip service

you taste like jasmine. with a trace of cinnamon. as I earn your earnest delight in slow hunger revealed in between your taut thighs and grinding hips. you sound like you like it when I know you really love it but I let you underplay your hand so that I can kiss you into bliss.

### shall I stand in the shadows

if you must hide me from the world do so with the style of a princess or lady of the Court of Love, Acquitanian legends, and do right by your desire, t that I may serve my lady, in private counsels. shall I stand in the shadows that, one day, we shall be lovers in a mythology. as well as in fact.

#### to serve the courtesan

the lights must be of the proper level of illumination. the warmth of the chamber, pleasant to bare skin. the scent of honeysuckle and plumeria present in subtle seduction of one more sense, not to violate the rose petals on the bed or the jasmine of her flesh. tonight the courtesan pays her visit, to lift my spirits with her bare feet dancing on stone and rich carpets. her voice like starlight. her laughter like sunshine. her skin is the warm fabric of beauty textured to dreams.

amomancies call weave like smoke of incense through the air settling in fragrant pools within our minds, binding us to a common experience and intention, mention of hearts and souls and the midnight magic she summons. the illusion is that she serves me, but I am enthralled held to her whims and the sway of her hips, her lips branding my flesh with a fire and conspiring to take more than just a whisper against sheets to summon blithe and lithe spirits to dance in my imagination.

I will bind her in satin ribbons, red and black as to her mood, make her food for thought and deeper hungers we seek the limits of our rectitude and we intrude in fantasies that perhaps should stay in our imaginations but for the innocent curiosity of the meaning of our natures nurtured in graceless ages to bend but not break. cherished touch and the perished pains that we embrace in our tentative temptations, born and borne and sworn as oaths of a prescient purpose to draw nearer and dearer.

#### shared sacrament

in deeds of friction and wet release for hours upon hours, our powers merged and melted in unsheltered evidence of our desires, fires bright and flesh set afire. the test of truth. I am in you, curving into your infrared the darkness that illuminates with heat, sweet and sustained, pained by knowing it is transient and it may be days or months or never before I feel your brisance again. so I surrender to the savour and the flavour of your lips and hips as they eclipse all sanity and vanity for the price of feeling, feeling you embrace my face and place rare sacraments of my seed within you. all corners and curves consecrated. you are made holy and laid claim to as I press aside your veils and share these holy waters as proof against denial of what we are and were and will strive to be.

in selfish, and yet shared, sacrament we vent our soft and feral needs

#### vector

I provide the vector you provide the curve the iron of my entry will bend to your every swerve you will swallow up me and I will fill each nerve

the gentle glide of hands pressed against the smooth spiral of your emotions as they feed you need you bleed you for an extended moment's pleasure measure by measure touch by touch such sensual light burning a tattoo of invisible runes deep into you with every lap and kiss and penetrative trace of fingertips as heralds to a deeper thrust into the puzzle box of your body lips touching in every sense and tensions tightened and let in increasing unceasing releasing wet and fevered as you draw out my sacrifice exchanging passion for passion as expression of earnest peace until the feral chaos of the next hungry consummation

### solferino symphonies

a night, full of solferino symphonies. sweet and musky, dusk made flesh then an intimacy of fearless lovers. the legends are true and you understand your place in them above any mere pantheon. before there were gods, there were titans, greater than fate. but even stone is thrown down by time and the self-serving betrayals who covet a throne of bone and blood, flooding senses with relentless release. making love until the darkness falls then waking me with your insistent hunger. more than the animals, less than the memories. the music of our very breaths testing the acoustics of the cathedrals the altars the hidden shrines, divine and delightful even as they speak words of the inevitable as this moment's immortality is sealed in heated oils and the spoils of pleasure.

#### flow

flow from the mountains, flow to the sea, time is a river of raging chaos. lust and fear, the distant and the near. holy scriptures of beliefs disproven or at least discarded when inconvenient. a night fit for a Bavarian king, no ring but the filling is sweet and savoured in labours laboured in a night without shadows where the glow of inferred infrared lights the bed and the room, dispelling gloom in a solferino glow, going low, then rising up and into a heaven awaited in a purgatory they never taught in the catechism of false idols teaching their self-involved delusions that nonetheless served their purpose as I flow into your delta in turbulent joy.

### to speak of love in many ways

I know not what tomorrow brings to light as we are at length but a prophet's plot, given to live, to be forgotten, right or wrong. The mysteries that we have got and those that slipped away taunt and haunt us, but these are dust, riddles of no laughter as we reach with earnest hands for purpose beyond the moment, for lovely answer calming our doubts and pouts, then tender peace. Such joy best between two antipodes that reach a communed sense of true release from the sad and mad, senseless urgencies resisted in harmonic affection compelled to an higher pledge and passion.

### compatibility

the truth of the solitude is that it is more unnatural than any perversion, for we are made to fit like cunningly cut jigsaw pieces. interlocking and measuring against the overall picture of our vision of life. each curve and corner complementing one then another until a picture emerges and we step back to see the big picture.

#### artist

in the medium of creation you are a muse and yet far more. you move my soul without an effort, drawing out the radiant spore.

you do not need me to inspire you, you have demons of your own, angels dark and incandescent about you, ruby-blue in photic tone, driving dragons to distraction, tearing saints and demons asunder. a soul, elemental, to flash the light and crack the thunder.

I am grateful to have found you, you confound me with your airs. mysteries in the histories imagined you sustain me with sweet manna and dark tares.

### where I kiss you is a sacrament

I will kiss your lips and wander, finding solace where I might, touching the miracle of your eyelids, the delicacy of your ears. the elegance of your neck, feeling your pulse, I shall not bite, for I want you alive, all of you, kisses to mark where fears might linger, in every thigh and finger, marking what I would by your grace,

make vows to gods whose names are lost in forgotten rituals of the ardent races of lovers, finding good in the way you shudder when every line is set and crossed. you can watch if you want, or lay back and focus on the touch of my arrogant lips on breast and hips, eclipsing propriety to make my suit and refute your doubts as to just how much I want you, more than a moment, exposing my venerant idolatry as I take my fill, making sacrament on every altar spread with the offerings of you heart and flesh, each stone a lover's bed.

# from the book **Bragi**

photo of and by Mariya Andriichuk, 2017



### **Bragi bleeds**

the serpent and the succubus are baring polished fang for you. I caught the faintest glimmer of greylight off their ruby-blue metal surfaces. I heard the sheathes' whispering to me again last night as I dreamed memory.

slow cuts the quickslitter that drives home venom angry and opaque. take this phial and drink warm wine tonight when they come for you, as I do. no less breathes a riddle than I. no more to dream the clocks' mockery.

### pig iron and the myth of idolatry

John Henry was a fool a slave who gave his life for the notion that you are only a man if you die trying to keep up with the quotas and expectations of the management class

holding you down bleeding you dry until your heart bursts the hole still gets dug the steel is still driven the Mark II machine is brought in

songs will be sung to your widow and orphans maybe they'll make a monument to your misplaced heroism dying for another man's cause is not the same as living

### eclipse in Olympus

Apollonian indulgences hoping Artemis leaves the party early pretty pretty things dancing for smiles and the hope to be spoken of later when the minstrels show gratitude

the Gordian knot caught up in naught but the illusion of the transience of life this world is a single flicker of the strobe and we disrobe to impress, undress in the outer chambers and wait your turn

Hephaestus has his Aphrodite although I doubt she is faithful, too many

shepherds and minstrels and demigods playing the odds with a vessel of wine and a line taught them by the stranger in the corner

### infidelity

I should have stayed with you, remained faithful. lived up to the idealistic ideal that was perhaps unreal yet would have left a clearer legacy than caterwauling and the stranger who believes what they will because it is consistent with the mythology. sea serpents and such. much is dangled, tangled, star-spangled as a banner for an army that never marched anywhere but into Hell. following the trace faces that were there for the rush and the footnote in some distant collection of memories hemorrhaging the rage, the coeur rage, the phage of the page of the unamused muse when her totem fades from prominence and is taken from the shelf by the forces of history, mystery, and the scent of jasmine.

#### totemic

my heart was yours to use for a season until you grow tired of it and forget all the perfumed soft words sacrificed one night when you had use of the fire I set burning my manuscripts to split the night before it had crushed you, rushed you away from where you thought you wished to be, to light bonfires of dreams to rise as oaths to pray when all it was, in truth, was darkness' fear to be bartered for warm lips and comfort in the pretense never understood here where I stood as collateral report a calculated risk that my respect that to fallen flesh I'd still genuflect.

### the grief of Bragi and Apollo

it is the grief of Bragi and Apollo that flowers wither and die.

ancient religions. the cure and curse of man. passions personified, deified. made into words that endure beyond the flesh and fluids of our need to be merged with the divine. nothing but the idols and temples remain beyond the moment.

are there not yet goddesses who walk the night? are there not yet whispers in the silent halls that wend past my chamber and my tomb, the womb of my immolation and resurrection?

it is the grief of Bragi and Apollo that flowers wither and die.

so many broken chalices. so many shattered vows. so many craven cannibals among the sacred cows. and we are but the story. we are but the words. we are made to burn and pass. we are. but not I. what the blood cannot purchase, the soul consumes. what the hunger strips from us is...everything.

show me the path. teach me the dance. make me yours. there are so many parts of me yet salvageable. there are so many parts of me that you would have use of and that I would gladly give on an altar of madness.

it is the grief of Bragi and Apollo that flowers wither and die.

I can, at a distance, with a word, with a dream or thought, touch you in ways mortal flesh cannot and will not for those gates are sealed against sentient degrees of heat and seduction. we give what we can, hollow.

## right there

stop right there. consider not only the moment but the infinite cascade you invite with every action and fraction of thoughts conveyed in unreliable words

words are zephyrs and bricks and sticks you use to poke awake the sleeping dragons or beat them into submission or retreat.

I can see and have described colours you cannot imagine and the quantum chance you may catch me pleasantly or unpleasantly by surprise.

#### evolution

I will yet evolve. but I am what I am. potentials and past imperfect and realized at levels of granularity that you, and even I, shall never comprehend. I won't defend myself. poets take body blows and butterfly knives straight in and to full effects. you cannot make a silk purse from this sow's ear, but near as I can tell you have enough purses already.

#### we are social creatures

we are social creatures, features that fulfill us do not come from solitude but in finding where the cut cardboard curves best complete the image. the self-indulgence we pass off as proper reflection is a rejection of our best fates and forms, the warm norms of trust and peace in the release of our worst precognitions and errant arrogances. understand what you can, accept the rest, and test your best bets we place against shallow and fallow standards sold like dry lamps that do not give light or heat or hope once the market closes and we are left with the indifferent differences between myth and madness.

#### djinn

if I poured smoke to encase erase replace the ordinary that grinds us down with the fantasies you dream of

would you have the courage to make a triptych of the diptych you gave me as a present in the past where so much was left unresolved.

I want to answer every curiosity you ever dared asked and help you find the courage to ask more. I want to swirl in eddies of mist that have kissed the faces of every prayer you would dare give upon unaltered altars, as an agent of change often unrecognized after over the horizon and never to be seen in constellations again.

## Bragi to Freya, on his deathbed

I am not blind to the beauty but like a paralyzed man his bed a prison unable to touch or taste or smell only those things brought to him or that, by accident, slip though the walls of glass and steel and watchful eyes that institutionalize lies to their own ends. the sterility befriends those whose clothes tell a tale of wanderlust in worn soles and fraved hems and dust, dust of a thousand roads some walked to the horizon some merely tested with timid toes like an unfamiliar water pool at dawn, vawning a frigid maw to pull you in and cramp body and soul.

I am not blind to the beauty but bound to it. The sound of it is like music to a deaf man who can perceive the bass line as it shakes the snakes from the foundations of a world made of a necessity, a necessary doubt of things spoken with too much conviction, words used as truncheons to beat down relevant inconveniences. The luxury of truth is something few afford in the discordant umbilical left to hang, to dangle at an angle on the edge of cliffs we once leapt from, unafraid of the consequences of gravity and the pursuit of knowledge. I can see it, eyes open or closed, limbs and lips languid or posed like posturing candidates for a title I am not sure I would or should award again.

I am not blind to the beauty. I am not deaf to the music. I am not cold to your touch. I am not tongue-numb to your taste. I am not unaware of your perfume as you enter this room and leave a telltale marker to be followed into Elysium, if I am willing to rise from my chosen catalepsy and wear again the patchwork pelts and the mark of my station and office to follow where I swore I would go when the word was given in silent mouthing from across the room but in plainsight, for I am not blind to the beauty as I plant my fists in the stones and press upward with aching muscles to fulfill that which is ordained of me.

#### bonfire

the fire crackles in staccato code secret words unheard since creation as what once were trees towering overhead and providing rest and shelter are consumed to leave ash and memory.

in the moment they are generous and luminous the dancing flames reveal the names of everyone we once loved who is now ash and memory and so much past refractions of futures we once had never imagined.

#### and a dove

plainsong and the stench of regret, sweat as baptism, the schism spreads like a sickly grey pollen, fallen angels moult feathers for leathers and beat the wind into submission. I will wait for you to sober up, as into your cups is not the same as into me.

what for you may be a habit or hobby is to me religion with you as the highest priestess, if not an avatar of a goddess drawn near by the promise of worship and the words to make a scripture for future generations, hungry to know what was not defiled in this graceless age.

what I am what I offer what I am becoming under pressures that warm and deform any and all who even stand near enough to stuff themselves on the fragrant flagrant essence consuming us as it nourishes us. as it should be. a faith in more than self. a sanctifying kiss and coit.

## learning of the death of a well-regarded ex-lover

you called my name on your deathbed and I was not there. those in attendance did not hear, or did not care, or did not know a history you had left in mystery as if of Diogenes, naked revels in a passing sense of security and freedom where life was live and meant to be swallowed whole. peyote and mescaline. hallucinogenic revelations. the overpowering flower of your garden, tended, mended, ascended with unconditional enthusiasm.

it would have been my wish and will to be there for you, but I do not manipulate to consecrate, accepting free will with the attitude of a deity choosing to embrace it as righteous. when the word reaches me, if ever, of your passing... I will be lost in the distant but persistent reveries you invoke, speaking not of you to pagan pretenders who have surrendered their place at the altar for less arduous purposes and paths.

## feigning

feigning sleep when all I could do was lay awake and dream of you. your perfect flesh a canvas of desire a poetry of warm presence, eloquent and true. beautiful and mesmerizing. not yet. maybe never. but dreams are the currency of lovers at night.

#### evil

evil is a slippery thing, flesh fresh from the shower before we apply powder to reveal the fingerprints hints of what really happened while we were lying to ourselves on a bed of roses poses and suppositions reclining and seemingly upright to man (or woman) the barricades against the barbarians of the week

#### the moment

like a lover
you are here
now
for your own reasons
obvious to no one
not even yourself
seeking revelation and penetration
into a merged state of being
something other than
stuck in the sucking muck
of five minutes ago

#### borders

I don't want to steal your freedom but from time to time be granted permission to cross your borders lingering and sometimes sometimes watching the sunset then being allowed to spend the night

## **chasing Apollo**

gears and strings and waxwork wings the engines roar with Promethean fury the sky splits open against its will as we arc to the West, chasing Apollo back to where he tries to hide and slip past our watchful eyes and lies, behind us beginning again the ancient journey we can only frailty imitate and wait for maybe an afterlife in which we are part of the chariot and not just staring skyward

#### raku: 1

porous clay to hold the graceful tea we share in ceremonies that merely mime our passion. fashioned by the hands of artisans and gods to be durable and beautiful and of a purpose incidental to the actual consumption of life infused into water and leaves that grieves then giggles as it contemplates the transition from one form into another. like my mother and my father and all the ephemeral darlings that form constellations against the echoes of the big bang that may have happened infinite times before in the quantum foam that drives us home after an unexceptional party

## raku: 2

the most perfect gemstones are most memorable when they are not perfect. when flaws catch the light and render us awestruck with the dancing fire and lightning your flaws are your perfection, an insurrection against the ordinary sameness rendering reds and green and golds to grey before it fades away to nothing

#### raku: 3

you must come to me of your own accord. not lured or bought or caught in the webworks of my words, delicate, near irresistible, or I will find myself in a moral conundrum where free will and arch romance are at loggerheads and religion of desire is thrown down as a clay pot to shatter on stony floors, the shards only mocking token of what it was, broken like a promise made in silent prayer to earnest deity, hamstrung on principle making an impossible resolution in a logic trap snapping shut at the most inopportune times as intellect breaks against all the minstrel's magics to leave us cloistered in a cage of our own best intentions and inventions, dark and thirsting dry as the countenance of faith is beguiling and yet unsmiling.

#### raku: 4

in remembering you I forget myself which may be the most blessed gift I will find cast in ceramic madness to calculate numbers that even Cantor would have thought mad as I had it all then in elliptic orbit and obit I spun so far away as to break the pull of the solace of all the gods and goddesses of light

#### raku: 5

cast off blast off fast off the mark the court and spark barking mad parking bad in the tow away zone where we hone our peculiarities to an edge to wedge to ledge our legends on the top and stop to hop out and down to drown

#### raku: 6

in the season of the apple harvest I remember you, the unknown goddess yet unrevealed although not concealed, a field of grasses in a photo that was to be our announcement of our challenge to the world and time but the wind blew and your tumbleweed toes made short work as flows the sinister streams of yesterdays into tomorrows, leaving a present unopened a riddle for the ages wages war on certainty and promises abandoned

#### raku: 7

every man or woman forges their own chains. alloys of memory and belief. casting stones and casting the runes while whistling tunes without lyrics. a drink of water. a sideways glance. the flavour of sunshine, divine intervention and invention. pretensions and doubts. a fallen leaf displaying evidence of the previous Spring. coiled steel with a ruby blue luster a bluster of politicians and blasphemous preachers. poets: the weavers of memory and moments outside of the present bound in soundless groans while everyone is looking for a Messiah. or at least a good fuck.

#### **Pyewacket**

the simplest things hold no fascination, for in complexity is allure. the pure spectacle of colored bits of broken glass in the kaleidoscope. there are no one-petalled flowers, no night sky without dark pocks against which the infinite incandescences leave their sparkling marks to compel us to consider the splendid diversity of life and be sure that a song made of one note, with no harmony, in which the trope of mud against mockingbirds invokes, evokes, provokes the rocks to sing plainsong. we are drawn to the friction, the fiction, the sparks that come from conflict and a slightly askew smile that speaks of mysteries to be constant against our consternation. immolations in the winter of our most baffling boredoms and encapsulations of a craven raven with but a single word we've heard, revealing nothing but our cowardice. there are no saints found in the salt flats, no evil more than grey histories filled to the shallows with ancient bones that will crack and splinter. that equip us for naught but mediocrity and madness, our deities graven by our own hands from balsa and excuses to the muses that we miss. here is my praise for the complicated woman, for she is human and true and made in the image of a God who carved all seasons and reasons that we may burn or freeze, that made daisies and diseases, light and dark, a kiss and a slap, to communicate the great spectrum that is more than seven, more than false taxonomies put in place to grant barriers between green and blue. the seams in my dreams make room for more climate than one season to revel in diversities found in musics of infinite cultures, ornate and stark, redefining, in the higher moments, the very essences of hell and heaven.

#### I do not chase the wind

I do not chase the wind for it cannot be caught and after I have fought my way to the mountaintop there would be no way to go but down.

I do not chase the wind for dreams are for their time and I am wise, if past my prime, and know how not to make an ass of myself by thinking above the waist sometimes.

I do not chase the wind for it is but a metaphor or five or six for the war between the soul and the flesh damned to fail and wail at rainbows "Not fair!"

I do not chase the wind for it would not be fair, although if I would dare, she might find me swift of foot, carrying my golden apples of poetry.

#### **Walsingham in Padua**

I have given my word. Strange word, word. It carries itself and more, boring eyes in the back of the skull when you are full of your own definitions of honor.

It is said there is no use in worrying about the water when you are dying of thirst and you find it, bubbling up pure, cold and with the slight air of the center of the Earth.

I have lingered enough, bare feet calloused by pain, denying myself and my desires. The fires a test of the metal that is at its best zested by a kiss extended into madness.

I have broken with the past, giving up more than you know, accepting a new commission, a new purpose, head bowed in humility that belies my arrogance and my skills.

You asked for me by name. I am called back into service of a distant liege who may keep me in foreign lands for a time before acknowledging me at court, welcoming me home.

But I am grateful and ready. I have counted the petals of the lotus. I have tested the metal of my blade and my pen, obeying the rituals that may seem arcane to you, but define me.

I will serve you until I fall. I will not swerve or lose nerve even if left, like Walsingham in Padua, to await the time when all is to be revealed, I will stay true to my vows.

## in the hall of mirrors: twenty

the apocalypse drips vinegar in the eyes of a bound god, fallen from grace and tasting the acid of his failures. impure, unsure and with no cure in sight for his blight, he rattles chains and leaves stains of his own blood to mark his presence and predicament. Phaeton's coursers shod with dogmatic memory, bent and spent and sent on adventures to buy back that which was given away on a misbegotten night, the orchard of golden apples swept away in a flood that orchestrates the fate of us all, our natures rebelling against our wisdom, which is learned from burned fingers that lingered too long, too close, to the heat of sweetness that drew us in to a light in the hall of mirrors, mirage and smoke dissipated by our own intemperate hastes, telling more about the ballistic trajectory of our flesh we express in words that curdle in the face of facades and badinage. we stand as pillars of life and light, until the inevitable felling.

## Erato beats her children

Erato beats her children, Bragi takes to drink. And within the dragon's den I don't know what to think.

The shadows are upon me. They smile in black and red. There is no solace left to me not even in my bed.

Erato beats her children, Bragi takes to drink. And within the dragon's den I don't know what to think.

The knight, once white, is greying. Tarnish takes its toll. And hungry critters, preying, find their victuals in my soul.

Erato beats her children, Bragi takes to drink. And within the dragon's den I don't know what to think.

Calliope and Karnak. A leprosy abounds, more final than a heart attack, and full of silent sounds.

Erato beats her children, Bragi takes to drink. And within the dragon's den I don't know what to think.

## the rise of Bragi

the kissed thistle parted and the voyage was started on running feet, sweet with desire and a fire like light, bright and weightless, the fates stated their objections and we laughed, laughed like children at the wind. but I have risen, and seen the flavour of the sky. I have risen, and given my favour to deny that I have not the hand to handle this curve and much as I serve at your pleasure, it is wrong to bind a god to an uncertainty, so resolve me. once, and for all time, speak truth, even small words have cured the greatest night of ignorance and doubt, shouting truths does not make them lies, paper sometimes is just a place we thought we'd been and I have miles to travel to the end of the day. join me. or, if not up to the journey, be on your way. I walk with the serpents and the angels.

#### romantique

I touch you within a light, consumed and consummated in a divinity relegated to a cliché wrapped in an enigma. bitter herbs of a passed over past, the angel of life awakes, taking me to a new evocation of demons as I reach within you with etheric hands, unwinding like funeral shrouds to touch the dead skins of trophies of fading dawns reborn and reborne to the Suttee pyres where the survivor is expected to die with the dead. and I said your name, the way you like to hear it, with honest passion and a promise of healing tears to come. and they emerge from an unexpected quarter to flood senses already overcome with a truth that at very least, I shall never relinquish to false memory for the purpose of the mocked dead.

## Sigyn for my sins

there is no Sigyn for my sins. none to catch the venom that I have brought on myself, the Earth, itself, shaking, nonetheless, from the agony of punishment.

the is no Sigyn for my sins. no free will to defy the gods out of pity and out of love. better still, in love, but the illusions persist. like Gilda, I do not survive the night.

there is no Sigyn for my sins. I have borrowed the chains of Promethean glory, but am judged unworthy to bring the fire. for my sins I am outcast and exile. the inexorable venom, my legacy.

#### **Brutus: Act One**

This diseased horizon. No smooth line to define the necessity of good and evil, merely expediency and the illusion of honor. The eyes of the prophet, taken like Cicero's tongue, in outrage and revenge.

I walk this bloody parapet, stains visible to me, alone. Asking gods and goddesses that are now trivia to those who have not yet the bark of many winters to allow them to measure the relevance of sin.

The coals flicker, but never die, sustained by will and made merry in a sideshow feast of jeremiads, everyone weeping until the clowns and jugglers return in the next act, to sweep clean the inconvenient emotions.

Every stone speaks a story that I am deaf to hear. Every story was important when it was a moment in a day on a life that fell to those who lived it, making the same half-aware sentiences of the world.

The honorable are played by the ignorant, who think the upper hand is something of an higher order of evolution. But it is the last poet standing who determines the legacy, as words stick wicked.

I have no use for the bartered truths that get us through the day and on our way to our next abomination. I have given up my ambitions to serve an ambiguity with the faith best held for the temple mysteries.

#### **Hephaestus to Aphrodite**

You are beautiful.

I, deformed.

A god, no doubt, but not one that they burn fragrant oils to gather the favour of.

I am unworthy of you, unworthy of your love.

It burns within me, this passion, and yet it burns before me that for all bonds and bindings you will never really love me.

Just the idea of me.

The lame god, in the forge of souls, hammering shape to metals

I have drawn out of lifeless stone.

You are beautiful.

I, deformed.

Cyrano suffered thus, and ultimately it cost him the woman he loved, who would have loved him back,

I suspect (ask Apollo, he would know).

But he was man and she, woman, we burn at a higher degree, our passions set fire to the skies and people run and scream and dream that their hearts could survive such heat.

But they are not that sturdy.

You seek balance in my malformations.

You laugh and smile and feign passions beyond the novelty of my hideous countenance.

You are beautiful.

I, deformed.

For all your beautiful words and soft touches, I know what and who I am. I know the smell of burning sulphur under my nails and know that my kisses are that of a brute, a thing.

Not a god, which is what you deserve.

I am twisted and I know my place.

Those things which I craft, that is what is sought by those who follow the twisting labyrinth into the hot bowels of the Earth to find me.

Lovely ornaments of silver and alloys I alone can make and master, for I am Hephaestus.

But that does not make me beautiful.

That does not make me worthy of a goddess.

#### **Aphrodite**

Goddess of the Chaotic Erotic! queen of fantasies and flagrant fragrant passions. beauty personified, like you, irresistible. I surrender my essence, blessed Hephaestus, a mere craftsman in presence of the divine, beauty personified, like you, irresistible.

#### **Athena**

choices made, wisdom incarnate. understanding. the power of knowledge and the knowledge of power. what next is necessary and what are the wagers and the likely outcomes. not omniscient, but close enough to drive her forces to victory. the excellence of superiority, found in reason.

#### Hera

Jealous wife. keeper of the hearth and home. peer plotter to the most clever, to balance the scales of fate that matched her with an incorrigible man-child, who thinks that rage is power and plays his game in seductions, reducing his presence to an archetype, unworthy of the crown, stolen from his father.

#### **Artemis**

Mistress of the Hunt, bearer and healer of disease. the cruel reality of nature personified, implacable. doing what she, by nature, feels will please her hungry heart and nature. fate's most able agent of cruelty, but not of malice or intent, for she is not judging those on whom her wrath is spent.

#### **Demeter**

Weep for your daughter, gentle Demeter. Weep that she is stolen away, to dwell in darkness. Rejoice in her return, but burn the fields in mourning when she spends her seasons in the halls of her most plutonic husband. Weep while nature sleeps. How the very seasons are affected by your heart!

#### **Dionysia**

I think the god of wine and wild revels should not be a man for what can a man know of the release through transcendence that women do not already know and show us in seductions. from the gardens to the Anthesterian mysteries. histories of the race show us that women lead the parade and charade when pleasure is measured off the scale through the night.

#### The Muses

Not the bastardized nine, but the true trinity of the Muses. Aeode, the muse of song, whose voice and words flowed like honey from the tight core of the world's divinity. Melete, practice, to perfect the role and recitations, to find nuance in the perfecting of passions expressed. Mneme, from whom memory is personified, the voice and repetitions granting immortality. You are personified in these three, my love, drawing out from me, and their goddess cousins what of me is nothing less than my last, true religion, in finding my theology in your arms and heart.

#### what remains of the street

Mitch is a bitch and she lives on the street down from her parents off the grid a kid skidding closer to the edge where the sedge has withered and the victim of her merciless mercies is her

as

the problem isn't with her but the forces that shape her that rape her

that steal her sense of self-worth

daughter of the Earth told she is worth less than nothing neon peon pain.

Wrong hair wrong eyes fat thighs and last year's nail color.

The hardest things are the most brittle

spittle is spat

blending with the street covered in rain and pain and stains.

Running into the gutter.

## feeding the wolf

probably a mistake to step away. way away. hiding in the open. missing kisses as a currency of self-expression. words are immortal. immortality is oversold. the long, slow, inexorable drip slipping into the riptide of torn emotions. lying lovers covering their sins with my mantle because I volunteered the veneer of my virtue like some goddamn Galahad when all along I know I am far from the paladin, the holy crusader, fully cognizant of my flaws, the laws of man and god that I have looked the other way on, but in the isolation there is a vague reassurance that I am still far from the nosferatu's dream life can proceed even if I have less time to capture a muse to be my Sigyn my Idun or any of a thousand mythological or jungle beasts that feast on nostalgia and notoriety while I, I take my fill of models and mold, the wolf takes cold showers powered by perverse pride in the ability to say no.

#### Hetaeron

I am known by many names. Some names. Some sobriquets. Some epithets of those unaware of the many moving parts in the truths they think they know.

In the West I am Hetaeron. In the East the Amomancer, the priest of passion. To myself I answer to no name, for to do so would bind me to the spirit of it.

In the North I bring the fires, in the South I quench desires. In lands far and uncertain, I am called by whatever badge that I will find on lovers' lips.

For the moment, I am content to warm myself here, out of the darkness, and wait for the songs to return, burning my feet to walk again on paths I had not realized until I heard the voice.

## when the morning never comes

when the light is ever absent and the morning never comes. when the silence is oppressive, not even distant drums to mark the rallying of the faithful, the courage of the few anew who pick up the banner of the purpose to the view more than merely selfish, shallow dreams of centuries fallen far too fast to justify the feasting of furies surrendered to the pretense of virtue in expediency. bound to madness and the sorrowed illusion of the free.

#### collision with the morning star

captured in slowly deteriorating orbit of your Venusian plains the hellish acid of your atmosphere will burn brighter as I descend in final fall to be consumed doomed by having been captured by your nature to draw me in and spin me to a cataclysmic finish a sound that tears apart the ground and sky as I am absorbed into you.

the aftermath of a passing flirtation not oblivion but the witness of those creatures who saw my descent and wondered at the nature of my origin as my constituent elements become part of the hard, sulfurous heart forming the sphere of legends of light love and the scrimshaw of my fragments that, even unobserved, are proof I once was.

## Midnight and the heat rises

and all the lovers danced for dreams that never were to be.

in intricate and heartfelt sways beneath the elder tree they worshipped with their mysteries they worshipped with their prayers they worshipped through their histories retold in minstrels' airs.

and all the lovers danced for dreams that never were to be.

both Heloise and Abelard retained their lust to see their paramour and more took up in currents to be caught on colding sheets where feral heats turn all that is to naught.

and all the lovers danced for dreams that never were to be.

penitent and patient. penetrative, native to me when I am immolated by your craving and desire to sacrifice my seed and need into your greedy fire.

and all the lovers danced for dreams that never were to be.

#### I am the serpent

Coiling around you, my arms entangling your elegant legs. My tongue, tasting the air and more, flickering as a trademark An archetypal lover seeking to derive sustenance This is not Eden, this is not Canaan, and not Megiddo. I am but a humble serpent, asking the subtle questions That will loosen your resistance and make you realize that Taking the offered fruit of the tree of knowledge and pleasure In your warm and not-unwilling hands and taste it between lips Of every latitude and attitude to find and grind Awakening you to your nakedness, as did I to sigh And lie and die many times tonight to be reborn with you As we become a cautionary tale for new religions.

#### **Moral sentience**

Moral sentience: the ability to know what is right and what is wrong. There is more to good and evil than not doing one or the other, Smothering ourselves in codes of conduct that teach nothing But the rote memorization of steps to take and to avoid. The kata of movement, square dancing in the darkness. Precision maneuvers that accomplish nothing unless the action Is more important than the intent or the passion, fashioned Of smoke and shadows and mirrors and memory, anecdotes That coat us in a sand-encrusted lubricant the tear us And leaving little doubt but that we are worn down and away.

#### **Little secrets**

Tell me all your little secrets
The one you fear
The ones you love
Tell me all your little secrets
So that when I tell you mine
I will not feel too vulnerable
And if you don't want to
Tell me all your little secrets
That's okay as sometimes
People have buried their pain
So deeply that it is impossible
To recall on what exact shelf
You left that particular journal
Because nothing is ever really
Lost, merely misplaced.

## The sabotage of gods

the gods sabotage themselves. tired of being different in a world where mediocrity is prized above all else. I have seen your radiance as you shade and jade it, pretending to be nothing, pretending to be grey remnants. it is difficult to be deific. painful to rise above the muck. we are our most comfortable when we are nothing extraordinary. it is easier that way, that path of fieldstone and failure. the allure of artificial urgency. the gods sabotage themselves.

## falling into darkness

it is only in the light that we learn what is that's right and learn what we must fight against at night the darkness and the black within us, pulling back against all hope and dreams of peace, we stack our paltry chips and dip our hands in holy water for a gamble and a prayer we swore we'd never again utter but here we are at equinox, slipping from the dream, falling into darkness, with an ancient, echoed scream that reflects off into nothing, there's no angel on the way, the fall is all that matters. it is alone we pay the price of our perditions and the sum of all our pain laid against us on the jagged stones to pull a crimson stain and deposit us as broken forms, a warning to be made to the fools who would repeat the path in lover's foul charade

#### **DFW**

on the stones of our temptation I lay as shattered glass fallen from a height, thrown down by my own gilt guilt, blood spilled as sign of divine consideration, martyrs pass in solemn procession of bowed heads and prophets killed because the rabble did not care for honest message delivered in appropriate judgement upon them when they did not wish to see the truth their doom presage in unsubtle words against subtle sham omens, gem, bone, lots cast to disavow responsibility for the actions we take, the vows we break, as we make our own validations against our virtues, fealty to our own justifications, our dreams come to wake and mesmerize us with seven powers we deny ever influenced us, we live in every lie.

#### **Qoheleth**

One day the very sound of my footsteps, so loud in your ears, shall have faded and I will be an easily dismissed memory, practically an abstraction, a fraction of a moment's thought.

Tales of my existence shall be bought and sold in manners we have not yet considered, bound as we are to technologies that sit before us and bore us waiting for the next big thing.

Someone will say they once met me, and others will pretend that I am just a story made up to teach lessons to children, plastic as their dreams are, plastic as their hearts and minds.

I will have been, as my writing these words here and now prove, but my relevancy will be a question, for love and hope may pass from the emotional vocabulary of mortals, the words lost.

My words will outlast this generation, and many more to come, numb to their own vanities as in Qoheleth's distant teachings, but truth endures, sure, pure, and to cure the follies that follow.

## antiquated

the faint whiff of copper in my night sweats remind me that I am not so young or fit as I once was.

but I am not ready to quit this world and dive into the next level of existence.

I am still trying to tie up the loose ends of a hydra born with Gordian DNA before I away.

the inconvenience of death is the loss of ability to make for changes in this world, so I write.

love letters to the human race, laced with irony and humility and arrogance and desperate hope.

## beyond me

every day I wrestle with my conscience seeking to draw out the poisons that I injected with words and deeds I thought were needs or at least natural reflex and instinct. the war still rages within me the evil and the divine, the point by point by point debate between he who is locked in a cage (but not allowed to die for I need his vigor and his feral fantasies to keep me appreciative of the beauty and bounty of a world that slowly fades from my grasp) and the construct the golem (fashioned by my hands from unchaste earth and animated by cognitive therapy passing for prayer) to serve as evidence of the art of the effort to make of us more than just another failed experiment in the garden of madness and regret.

#### contemplative seduction

sit with me. we don't need to speak. a furtive glance or touch communicates more than most words, and are heard completely. touch me when you are ready. I will not recoil. but I want you to be as content in all that happens, that it was by your will. I have lived long enough to know the essence of joy is free will. teach me the language of your touch, your eyes, how you breathe. inhale me. close your eyes and see the shadows on your soul, thrown by the illumination of my fire, dancing far enough away that you are unburnt by it. but the light is there. see your presence as interpreted by my impressions, then steer my fantasies.

#### surreality

I will not know the taste of the wind as it blows across the grass in Harmony Grove ever again. Time passes and memories that are indelible still come distant. Insistent resistance to the changes life arranges. Absent friends and family who are little more than two dimensional images and names on Arnettsville stones. Grief is not a relief for it relieves nothing, saline rain that stains aging skin grown thin waiting for the worms that will be denied their feast when I am released by seal and modern chemistry. Sarcophagus or urn. Everyone takes their turn to learn what waits beyond the veil. Memory is the curse of those who care, heir to a fractured throne and boneyard politics, ridicule and the tools of sepulture.

#### what dark magicks

spark spark spark spark the tinder catches. then the kindling. spindling tongues of flame climb in defiance of gravity and the disingenuous promise of earth. spark spark spark spark whim becomes thought then dream. plans made and actions accomplished. the moment and the aftermath flow like thick dark blood. spark spark spark spark prayers and spells, amomancies and necromancies. stolen breath. summoned death. the deceits of the prestige. look away before the spark catches you unaware.

#### the blood of Kvasir

drink deep, even sleep will not still your mind once you have taken in my mead. you feed and then you feed others. sisters, brothers, the children of mortals who never bleed to so worthy of a purpose but that heroes are woven of all the whispers as the cithara draws the venom spat by wicked serpents and pale visitors whose keening wail chills your blood, faeries that walk through walls and down halls forgotten by all but skalds and trouveres, memories weaponized to break the will of Wotan, amomancies in Aphrodite's bed where, tonight, I will lay her and my head.

#### **About the Author**

William F. DeVault has, in his creative run (so far) amassed tens of thousands of poems (and those are just the ones that passed first reading). He has published over 20 books, received his unfair share of sobriquets, and performed his poetry all over the continental United States. He has read in churches, bars, parks, schools, libraries, and brothels.

Married twice, divorced twice, but still the romantic optimist, he has fathered three children in whom he is well pleased, and mentored dozens of poets. He founded and lead the Romantic and Erotic Poetry Group for America Online, and that service's Passionate Craft poetry workshop.

He was named the **Romantic Poet of the Internet** by Yahoo in 1996 and the **US National Beat Poet Laureate** by the National Beat Poetry Foundation for 2017-2018. Many consider him the Poet Laureate of the Internet for his presence and pioneering use of the internet during and even before the mid-1990's.

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"WILLIAM F. DEVAULT HAS PRETTY MUCH DONE IT ALL, FROM BEING CROWNED THE ROMANTIC POET OF THE INTERNET BY YAHOO TO SERVING AT THE U.S. NATIONAL BEAT POET LAUREATE, ALL THE WHILE PUBLISHING A SERIES OF ACCLAIMED BOOKS INCLUDING HIS MAMMOTH AND MIGHTY SELECTED POEMS AND PASSIONS: 1972-2011 AND FOUNDING VENETIAN SPIDER PRESS. BUT AS WELL-DESERVED AS ALL OF THE ACCOLADES HE HAS RECEIVED ARE, HIS LATEST BOOK, QUINTESSENCE, COULD BE HIS BEST WORK YET.

LEADING THE READER ON A SENSORY (AND SENSUAL) JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY, FROM "THE PAIN OF LIFE, ACCUMULATED SCAR TISSUES" TO "COTTON CANDY KISSES," "APOLLONIAN INDULGENCES" AND MORE, DEVAULT'S QUINTESSENCE FEELS DEEPLY AND BY TURNS STIMULATES, EDUCATES, AND SCINTILLATES. POETS, LOVERS AND POETRY LOVERS, IF IT IS UNFAILING ARDOR YOU SEEK, LOOK NO FURTHER. WHEN "SPARK SPARK SPARK / THE TINDER CATCHES," BE THERE AND BURN WITH QUINTESSENCE."

—John Burroughs, Ohio Beat Poet Laureate and author of Rattle & Numb: Selected and New Poems, 1992-2019.

